The Spiritual Life

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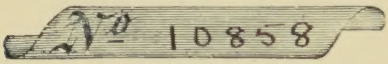

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SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

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SUGGESTIONS

FOR THE

SPIRITUAL LIFE

College Chapel Talks

BY

GEORGE LANSING RAYMOND

Professor of Oratory, Williams College, 1875–1881; of Oratory and Esthetic Criticism, Princeton, 1880–1893; of Esthetics, Princeton, 1893–1905; of Esthetics, George Washington, 1905–1911

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PREFACE

Just why I have rescued the contents of this volume from the bonfires to which many of my allied products have been consigned, and have decided to print it, would be difficult for me to determine. One can never be certain of interpreting correctly his own motives. I should like to attribute my action to a recognition of the fact that every man has a way peculiar to himself of looking at the truth, and, by communicating his own views of it, may become peculiarly helpful to others whose mental temperaments, processes and requirements are similar to his own. Indeed, as one of the friends urging me to the course adopted declared, a publication doing this would be worth while, even though it should meet the needs of only a single reader. My friend might have added—what his words suggested to me—that it might meet these needs even though the motive for publication were not the worthiest possible; even though it were a result merely of that itching to see one's thoughts in print which evinces the besetting insanity, if not sin, of minds of a certain type not unlike my own. My friend might have gone on to say, too, that whatever impels one, it is sometimes wise for him to accept his human nature exactly as Provi-

dence has framed it. We can not all be actuated by the highest motives. The next best thing is to live true to the highest of which we are capable.

With thoughts like these in mind, I have brought together the material in this book. Most of it has been selected rather than something else because belonging to the group of addresses, possessed by almost every one situated like myself, which have been borrowed and read in manuscript, or have been requested for publication, or, after many years, have been remembered in outline by some one who has heard them, and supposed them to have been instrumental in conveying information, in allaying doubt, in strengthening faith, or in inciting to a reform in life. Two or three, I must confess, have been included as a concession to the apparent curiosity of conventional thinkers interested in discovering what kind of religious appeals can accompany opinions like those suggested by writings of the character of "Cecil the Seer" or "The Psychology of Inspiration."

I have tried also to select that which, whether destined to be read in private, or in gatherings where no clergyman is present—which I understand to be the use to which collections of this kind are sometimes put—would be able to reach the ordinary Protestant mind without suggesting objections on account of sectarian pre-judgment. Besides this, I have thought it desirable that, though embodied in apparently independent discourses, the whole of what is presented should deal with important phases of

spiritual life with a certain degree of consecutiveness, if not completeness. These ends I trust that the thoughtful reader will discover that I have been able to attain.

The secondary title of "College Chapel Talks" is appropriate because about everything in the book has been used, in substance at least, either at Williams College, or at Princeton University, at times when I was taking my turn in rotation with other professors, in conducting the Sunday services. It is hardly just to myself, however, not to add that all except the two addresses with which the volume ends were originally prepared for a church of which, before beginning to teach, I had charge in Darby Borough, a suburb of Philadelphia. They, therefore, give expression to my thought as it was at a time when my mind was comparatively immature. I am reminded, however, that a certain degree of immaturity may increase, rather than lessen, that which imparts interest, especially by way of appealing sympathetically to those who themselves are immature, and who, as a rule, make up the majority of hearers or readers. Besides this, the use of material prepared so long ago seems almost worth while on another account,—on account of the incidental tribute that it affords to the lasting youthfulness and vitality of truth. There is certainly reasonable ground for satisfaction afforded by the fact that, after forty years in which there have been great changes in ecclesiastical statement and practise, I have not found it necessary, in preparing for

this publication, to make anywhere any material alterations.

A friend suggests that my methods of thought may not seem antiquated now, for the same reason that, when I was young, they seemed advanced. If of old they conveyed this impression to him, there may be something in his suggestion. But I certainly never sought, at any time in my life, to make them seem advanced. Nor do I think that any one who does seek effects of this sort, and nothing beyond them, will prove, after a lapse of years, to have acted wisely. Only one end can be worthily sought, when making any form of statement. This is to have it express the exact truth; and the permanence of its acceptableness depends upon the degree in which this end has been attained. There is, however, an incidental connection between the attaining of it and having one's words convey an impression such as my friend seems to have received. The connection is due to the fact that the ordinary presentations of religion involve the introduction of more or less of what one has been taught; and, as no teachers are infallible, more or less of traditional error. A speaker who tries to avoid the latter must appear at times, for this reason alone, to subordinate the old to the new—or what is the same thing—to the advanced; and, occasionally, to dwell upon the latter exclusively. Yet, in this case, he is producing the effect only indirectly. What he is trying to do directly is to avoid assertions of that which, owing to lack of time or data, he can not prove; as well as

denials of that which, owing to similar reasons, he can not disprove. In other words, he is trying to avoid reinforcing the doubt of cautious seekers after truth who have come to hear him, and, not only so, but trying, at the same time, to increase their faith. This latter, certainly, ought always to be the chief object in preaching; and the object certainly justifies advanced methods of thinking, so far as these are merely incidentally associated with it.

In view of such conceptions of mine with reference to the influence upon faith of certain methods of presenting thought, a few words more in this Preface are relevant. Faith, as every intelligent man knows, is an attitude of mind that has its source not merely in conscious intellection, but also in those subconscious tendencies of feeling and will which are particularly connected, though no one, perhaps, can satisfactorily explain exactly how or why, with the spiritual nature. Philosophers, as a rule, recognize that the most effective way of influencing these tendencies is through using what is termed suggestion —in other words not through information or argument, nor, as applied to religious truth, through traditional or dogmatic appeals. These sometimes reach the conscious understanding only; and, at other times, if they affect feeling and will, they do so mainly by way of exciting more or less opposition. Suggestion is a method that presents, as a rule, only such forms of statement as the recipient may be supposed to be prepared to receive; and, more frequently than not, therefore, are of the character al-

ready described as not likely to reinforce doubt. Contrary to what might be supposed, too, from this fact, they are not necessarily negative and vague in effect, but often positive and definite; and, because based upon belief in kinship between the human mind and the divine, seem sufficient in themselves, save in exceptional cases, to carry on all the work in the pulpit that the world needs. Moreover, there are a large enough number of them to keep all the occupants of these pulpits busy from our day to doomsday. These considerations, and what I deem the great importance of them, will sufficiently explain my foremost reason for choosing as a title for this volume, however deficient it may prove as exemplifying all that the phrase implies, "Suggestions for the Spiritual Life."

GEORGE L. RAYMOND.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

I

CARNAL AND SPIRITUAL MINDEDNESS

"For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."—Romans 8 : 6.

The older anatomists at one time believed that they had detected a place in the brain where the nerves of all the physical system could be proved to concentrate. Within that place sat, as they thought, the human soul, grasping the nerves by some means inconceivable to man, and holding them as reins with which to guide the movements of the body. There in a little cell, itself scarcely detected by the microscope, rested, as they thought, the heir of immortality. There was reason, the offspring of deity. So long as a man was guided by it, so long as all his appetites and desires were in subjection to it, there was safety. But should these grow insubordinate, should the steeds bearing the soul's vehicle through its earthly course gain the mastery over the driver, and plunge on wildly without restraint, nothing could remain for vehicle or driver but to be dashed to destruction.

Whether or not these old theorists were right as to facts, the principle to which their theory gave expression is a true one,—to mind, to obey, carnal things where one is influenced from below, by bodily

considerations, is death: to mind spiritual things, where the unforeseen forces above that influence one through reason and the soul have control, is life and peace.

There is nothing in the Scriptures to lead us to infer that anyone in this world is wholly free from the influence either of spiritual or of carnal things,—to infer that he is completely carnally minded, or completely spiritually minded. The Apostle Paul says in one place, "I am carnal," [1] and, in another place, to the Corinthian Church, "Ye [2] are carnal." The one could hardly have been an apostle, or the other a church unless each had possessed something of the spiritual. In our text the writer intimates that to be completely carnally minded is death, and to be completely spiritually minded is life and peace.

The only way in which we can come to recognize the truth of a statement like this in a world where none are wholly carnal or wholly spiritual, is by noticing the tendency, so far as we can trace it, of each condition; and by inferring from this what the result must be when each has had its perfect work. Let us try to do this.

Our text implies, as do many others in the Scriptures, the existence of two sources from which our lives may be influenced,—the one spiritual, the other carnal. One may mind, think about, obey, the motives addrest to him from either source. His energies may flow outward with a spiritual or a carnal bias. In this regard, the soul may be likened to

[1] Rom. 7 : 14. [2] Cor. 3 : 3.

a bird. The bird may move through the air, or along the ground. If it do the former, it may fly many miles in a few minutes. If it do the latter, it may take many minutes in which to walk a mile. So with the soul. One's energies may glorify themselves as stimulated by the aspirations inspired from on high, or they may glut themselves as tempted by the appetites incited from below. If they do the former, in this life or in the life hereafter, the soul may live in that higher, spiritual region in which the realities of a single day may become thronged with the possibilities of a thousand years. If they do the latter, the same soul may descend to that lower, carnal region in which the possibilities of a thousand years may shrink into the realities of a single day. Through minding aspiration, one may live: through minding appetite, he may die. What do I mean by saying this? What does the Apostle mean by saying that to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace?

There is a sense in which his statement is literally true. Probably few of us gathered here today deem ourselves, or any of our immediate associates, in danger of a carnal mindedness that shall develop into literal death. But let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.[1] The course to ruin is a subtle one with all at first. The social glass, the exciting pastime, the indulgence of any kind, may seem far from dangerous. They may seem to impart an exuberance to one's spirits, and a positive in-

[1] 1 Cor. 10: 12.

spiration to one's energies. But what of that? Were we in a row-boat passing by the eddies of a whirlpool, as we neared the outer edge of it, we might congratulate ourselves upon the fact that now, at last, the tide was with us, and would hasten us along our course. So we might relax our hold upon our oars. But would our action, though we were ignorant of its consequences, interfere with the laws of nature? Would it stay the power sucking underneath the keel,—those forces grappling at the intruder with a strength that, by and by, no human effort could resist, and destined to drag our boat downward into the vortex? Not to speak of the loss of health, nerve-power, self command, and the gradual decay of physical strength which, as we know, follow early indulgence as a shadow does its substance;—not to speak of the general fact, which every man in middle life finds to be true, that the wicked do not live out half their days,—this audience contains few of long experience who can not recall more than one young person—I can recall one at this moment who was with me in college—apparently as high-minded, as pure, certainly as inexperienced in personal contact with vice, as any who are present here, whom a single night begun with evil companions, and a careless glass of strong drink, has thrust, without the intervention of a single vestibule to give warning of the danger, into the very throne-room of corruption, entailing taint simply irremediable,—not only to the brain but to the blood, not only to the soul but to the body, bring-

ing not only disease but death. To one who wanders where vice is contagious, who minds—attends to—it, literal physical death may be much nearer than he conceives to be possible.

But our text alludes to something more disastrous than the death of merely the body. It alludes, as we see clearly from the context, to the death of those powers, both of mind and of soul, of which the body is but the instrument. And a moment's reflection will show us that the statement that to be carnally minded is death or, as I have paraphrased it, tends to death, is literally true as applied to these also. Consider a man intellectually. Mental action of the highest character—i. e., rational action —implies choice,—the separation, for reasons that appeal to the mind, of one from many possible courses, and the rejection of all except this one. But now, just as soon as a man comes under the control of any besetting sin, becomes a gambler or drunkard, whatever it may be, does he not, so far as concerns his action with reference to this besetting sin, cease to be a rational creature? In the presence of this particular temptation, does he not act as irrationally as the steed led out of his burning stable at midnight when he breaks his halter and plunges back again into the flames? Not only does no spiritual motive lead him to deny himself present indulgence because he has chosen, instead of it, greater good in the world to come; but no intellectual motive any longer causes him to choose a greater good in the future of this world. To be carnally minded, so far as he

is such, is death to him intellectually. Though he may know what is best for him, this fact does not influence his will. In truth, he scarcely balances his motives at all; makes any choice whatever. He acts precisely like the brute, when, of two bones placed before him, he takes the one nearest him, whether or not it has the most meat on it. The man who is carnally and not spiritually minded seeks to gratify himself by indulging in whatever may happen to be nearest at hand. Because he yields repeatedly to this temptation, by and by, usually, he forms a habit of immediate indulgence regardless of future consequences. And, if this habit be formed, that general tendency which characterizes all rational action, and gives one success as a rational creature—that general tendency which causes a man to deny himself in the present for the sake of future good—makes him in youth honest, industrious and energetic so that his age may enjoy wealth, position or fame,—that tendency becomes dead within him. To be carnally minded is death to that which makes a man act rationally.

But let us go on; rational action, besides being influenced by the operation of analysis which separates one course of action from others, is influenced, at the same time, by that which underlies and determines the principle in accordance with which the one course rather than the other is chosen. We may describe this principle as the synthetic power of the constructive imagination, a power which, when stimulated by considerations of what is above and beyond

one, can cause the mind ideally to apprehend and make real to itself experiences properly belonging to another, future or higher, state of existence. For my own part, I can hardly conceive of any joy that could be left to life, if one were bereft of this power. It is this, more than anything else, that causes the common practicalities of every-day experience to become bearable. It is this that brings to the eyes that bewildered look that is so beautiful in childhood, as it gazes out upon a world with full faith in the unseen future good behind the veil of visible reality. It is this that dawns with a glamour of romance about the hope of early manhood. It is this that shines with its soft radiance of almost heavenly purity about the quiet confidence that pervades a loving home. It is this that pours down with a more than noonday splendor upon hill and vale and stream and meadow, while above, about, beneath them all, the soul discovers by "that light which never was on land or sea," vague outlines of a place of rest filled with glories which "eye hath not seen,[1] nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man." But where is this life of the ideal, this apprehension and realization of good not seen, to one who has formed a habit of ignoring it, under the delusion that he can satisfy with real objects—carnal and finite—the desires of his soul for that which is spiritual and infinite? As often as we see the hopeful faces of the children, and contrast them with the vacant stare of so many of their elders,—see gentle

[1] 1 Cor. 2: 9.

sensibility turned into gross sensuality, generous sympathy into crafty selfishness, high aspiration into low avariciousness, we can realize that it is literally true that to be carnally minded is death to ideal life.

And if it be death to ideal life, it soon, from this very fact, comes to be the death of all that can stimulate the real vitality, or enhance the real enjoyment, of the spiritual nature, which, underlying the merely intellectual nature, probably renders the ideal life possible. Let us recall the elements of this spiritual life. There is faith,—a feeling that can be exercised toward a fellow being as well as toward God. To say nothing about the attitude of anyone's soul toward God, of which none of us can know certainly, did you ever see a mean or vicious man who had much faith in the goodness or virtue of his fellows? There is hope,—did you ever see one of such a character who had much hope for himself or for the race? There is love,—did you ever see a confirmed gambler or debauchee—any one who had disregarded the claims of his own higher nature —who had much regard for the claims of others upon himself? Did he care, or really care to care, for his wife or children? Then there is the kind of service rendered to God and to man which is the expression of love within. Isn't it almost absurd to speak of the gratitude, fidelity, integrity, generosity of a thoroughly vicious man? Ah, faith, hope, love, and all that is characteristic of a life of love, are dead within such a character. And the carnally

minded man, who manifests none of these better traits towards others,—how can he expect to receive from them that confidence, encouragement, sympathy and help which he who receives them knows to be the ones that embody the only experiences in this world which are capable of really satisfying the soul?

And now notice, friends, that the death of physical vitality, of rationality, of ideality, and of all those higher activities fitted to satisfy the deeper cravings of the spirit, follow, as inevitable results, upon indulgences that seem to be very slight at the beginning. The truth is, that our minds are not as passive as are mirrors. They can not be made to reflect one kind of life, and then be turned somewhere else, and be made to reflect, with equal accuracy, another altogether different kind of life. They are more like the glasses used by photographers, where the view once taken remains to nullify or modify all future views. A fearful truth is this! Each sin indulged leaves its image somewhere in the character. That image is revealed by memory wherever any new scenes turn the thoughts in a direction suggestive of that sin. The medium through which one views the new already bears the impress of the old. Therefore to the pure, all things are pure, and to the impure all things may become impure. A man who never has contracted, for instance, a drunkard's appetite, so far as concerns any consciousness of any tendency toward intoxication on his own part, may be an absolutely free man. He may go where he chooses, and do what he chooses, without any ap-

prehension of temptation to himself, or of being in a situation where he is running a risk,—where he is in the presence of threatened danger. But suppose that a man has been a drunkard; seldom, after that, can he even see the foam and sparkle in the glass without a consciousness of something near at hand that may sting like a serpent and bite like an adder. And this is not a law applicable to one vice only. It is applicable to all vices. Delirium tremens is not the only disease in which the weakened nerves see serpents writhing where others see nothing. There are those to whose corrupted imaginations every pleasure in the world is simply an embodiment, figurative, if not literal, of that old serpent. To some there is never any sacredness in beauty or grace, the most elevating. They live in no need of the debauch to corrupt them. There is equal food for evil desire in their own homes, or in the church. Why, all over the earth, friends, God has placed inexhaustible springs of pleasure, sparkling to refresh our thirsty spirits. The vicious view these as thru microscopes that cause each drop they gaze upon to teem with vermin. And so, to prove that to be carnally minded is death, it is not necessary to lift the veil that hides this world from the next. To say no more, the presumption is that the same conditions exist there that exist here, and who, if he could avoid it, would live in this world the life that some have made for themselves,—drinking in poison with every drop of pleasure, listening to a siren's spell in every sound of sweetness, perceiving, in all things about them,

that which lures them to danger and to death,—their whole existence almost literally lighted up by the flames of hell rather than by the sun of heaven! Let him then who is free from the taint of vice, for the sake of his own future comfort, remain so. Otherwise, he may lose the pleasures which are most desirable in this world. More than this, he may lose the possibility of enjoying even those things that he has chosen instead of them. The time may come for him when everything in which it is any longer possible for him to take pleasure may appeal to his experience as the winecup to the drunkard,—one glance, one grasp of the glass, one quaff, then another and another,—with only the briefest moment between the hope of exhilaration and complete insensibility. To be carnally minded in this world as well as in the next, may mean death to all enjoyment.

And not only to enjoyment that is physical, but death to all that which, for intellect or for spirit, can make life, anywhere that it happens to be, worth living. You remember, perhaps, the old Greek story of how Ulysses caused his sailors to stop up their ears as they neared the land of the sirens whose sweet song had allured to their shores so many others who had passed that way to be welcomed only with destruction; and how, thus prepared for the danger, his crew sailed safely by it. So long as men keep from hearing, from minding, from obeying the calls of vice of any kind, they are like the sailors of Ulysses. Their souls are safe from the spells

that otherwise might make shipwreck of them. The opportunity for indulgence may excite their curiosity, but this feeling is essentially different in kind from the temptation experienced after the first indulgence. This, if it do not open a new sense, whet a new appetite, at least tears the garment of uprightness, and the man knows that it can never again be what it was. It is all over with him now. That first step, the easiest to resist, if taken, proves to be the fatal one.

> And so I know
> Tho heaven may show
> Some mercy for all,
> No matter how small
> Their love for the good and the sure,
> Our first cure of sin
> Is not to begin
> To think of things that allure,
> But to keep the memory pure.

The easiest way not to experience the ends of evil is to resist the beginnings of evil.

But some of us, perhaps, have not resisted these beginnings of evil. We have yielded. Again and again, we have yielded to temptation. Others of us are aware that, altho we have not yet fallen into flagrant evil, we are standing upon the brink of its precipice. Who is there here who does not know that, notwithstanding his best endeavors to the contrary, his lower nature has a constant tendency, at least, to assert itself? How many are there who are not conscious that the germs of this disease of carnal mindedness, in its very worst forms, are already working within them? If so, what then? Then,

friends, the question is,—do we not need something that shall cure this disease? Where is the physician who can do it? What are the means through which he can accomplish it? In the same chapter in which our text occurs, the apostle gives us his experience as an answer to such questions. "The law [1] of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," he says, "hath made me free from the law of sin and death. If the spirit [2] of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you," he goes on to say, "he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you." There is no need of giving a theological interpretation to these words. In common language, men often speak of the fact that students in some lecture room, soldiers on some battle-field, catch the spirit of their teacher or leader; by which is meant that in view of the presentation before them of a certain mode of thought or of action, the students or the soldiers have become inspired to feel, think and do as the teacher or leader does. So the Bible represents to us that we all, in view of the words and works, the life and death of him who, as the highest ideal of spiritual life of which we can conceive, may be said to be the "image [3] of the invisible God,"—we all "beholding [4] in him as in a glass" the love and, therefore, "the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image"; i. e., may become inspired to feel, to think, and to act, as he did; we may come to have in us the same spirit that was in

[1] Rom. 8 : 2. [2] Rom. 8 : 11. [3] Col. 1 : 15. [4] 2 Cor. 3 : 18.

him; we may come to mind this spirit, and, thus, to be spiritually minded, which the latter part of our text declares to be "life and peace."

For, friends, when—to use the same term that we have already employed—we come, in view of what we have known of the Master, to catch his spirit, what does this imply? Why, it implies, on the very threshold, that we begin to have faith, faith in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It implies also that we begin to have hope,—for "faith [1] is the substance of things hoped for." It implies, too, that we begin to have love, not only for him who died for us, but for all those for whom he died; for we argue that, "if God [2] so loved us, we ought also to love one another." And it implies, in addition, that we begin to manifest the service which is the expression of love,—gratitude, fidelity, integrity, generosity. It implies, thus, the beginnings of new life in those elements of faith, hope, love and service which, as has just been said, it is the tendency of carnal mindedness to destroy.

But more,—with the quickening of these spiritual activities, to the man who has begun to be spiritually minded, comes a quickening also of the distinctively intellectual activities. One can never live a life inspired by faith, hope and love without having his understanding opened to that which is beyond him; nay more, without having the heavens opened to that which is above him. For such a man, anticipation, inspiration, and all the powers of the imagina-

[1] Heb. 11 : 1. [2] 1 Jno. 4 : 11.

tion, burst thro the darkness and the clouds that have gathered like shrouds over the dying soul of the carnal minded, till his real life, from horizon to zenith, is made bright by the starlight and the sunlight of an ideal life. Still again, while, inspired by these views, the man learns to "set [1] his affection on things above, and not on things on the earth"; while, as he presses [2] "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God," he chooses those things that are beyond; he cultivates those habits of self-denial in view of temptation to present indulgence, and of continued perseverance in well-doing which accompany, as has been shown, the highest forms of rational activity. And, once more, these high aims for which he strives cause him to subordinate all the energies of his physical nature to the interest of the nature which is above it, and, so far as he does this, the powers of his body will neither faint nor fail on account of too great abstinence or indulgence. He will become neither ascetic nor dissipated. For him to be spiritually minded will mean life not only for the spirit, but also for the mind and body,—a life, too, insuring peace because of that consciousness of safety, and that absence of conflict invariably accompanying healthful and harmonious action in all the different departments of the being. For him godliness will prove to be "profitable unto all [3] things," for "the life that now is," and for "that which is to come." My friends, especially you who are just entering upon life,—is there one of

[1] Col. 3 : 2. [2] Phil. 3 : 14. [3] 1 Tim. 4 : 8.

you who does not wish to do, and to have, and to be that which shall accomplish the most for his whole nature, physical, intellectual, spiritual? This is the question presented to us by our text. What is to be our answer?

Guides in the Alps tell us that, as they are journeying up over the ice along some narrow pathway that girdles a mountain precipice, they sometimes hear the sounds of objects falling into the abyss below, or see their shadows moving downward over the snows on the opposite sides of the valley. Then they say that they dare not look at the falling object nor at its shadow. There is danger, if they do so, that their bodies may follow the direction of their eyes,—that they may lean over too far, may lose their balance, and be dashed to pieces in the depths below. Their only safety comes from keeping their gaze fixed steadily on the pathway before them which leads them upward and onward. My friends, our only safety in the journey of life is in learning not to direct our attention to the things—not to mind—the things that lead us to look downward, but to keep our eyes fixed steadily on that which leads us upward and onward.

II

DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY AND HUMAN SERVICE

"When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And behold there came a leper and worshipped him, saying Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.—Mat. 8 : 1, 2, 3.

The unity of the universe is the most prominent conception suggested by the term that we apply to it; and one of the most common methods through which we are led to recognize this unity is through remarking the uniformity of law evident under its multiformity of manifestations. Thus, for instance, the same method of development may be traced both in the smallest plant and in the largest tree, in the most insignificant animal and in man. Accordingly, we can be led to apprehend the general features of the phenomena of growth as well through examining them in the one as in the other of these specimens. This principle furnishes the basis of all trustworthy speculation with reference to spheres of material or spiritual existence beyond the limits of our own vision. However broad may be the range of our investigation, we can not get rid of the ideas that our globe is a miniature universe and our earth a miniature heaven. Magnify the forms of the one,

glorify—make holy—the experiences of the other, and you have swelled the comprehension of the human mind to its utmost capacity. The shadows on the surface of the moon can seldom seem to have another source than deep-sunk seas or lofty mountains, as would be the case with similar shadows on the earth. The brightness shining from beyond the grave can seldom seem to be attributable to another cause than one like streets of gold and gates of pearl [1] in a celestial city. Let the seers' descriptions stand then. They are less fanciful than philosophical, and not one whit less rational than scriptural. Whatever may be true of those who live amid experiences of an existence of which we know and can know nothing, for us no material magnitude, no spiritual magnificence, is conceivable, save as we use the scope of present vision. This is the glass through which, gazing dimly, the mind of wonder and of worship must commune with every broader mystery.

This principle, by which we find some general law exhibited in many different special cases, enables us often to detect in the doings of Jesus a significance far more important than the careless reader, at first, might discover there. Here, for instance, is the story contained in our text,—aside from thoughts suggested by it, a very simple story told in a few words. But, aside from thoughts suggested by it, do you suppose that the story, where it is, would have been told at all? I can go further. Aside from thoughts

[1] Rev. 21 : 21.

suggested by it, do you suppose that anything in the universe would have been made or done? Are not material objects, all of them, the caskets in which divine wisdom has locked its treasures for the mind of man? Are they not, all of them, the caskets which man, on his side, must unlock before he can discover that with which his Maker intends to enrich the soul? I think that I am right about it; for if man have not a key to gain an opening to some deeper truth than appears upon the surface, then in what is he exalted above the brute, blessed by the beauty of the flower and the bounty of the fruit, in so far only as he is attracted near to seize and to devour them. Nay, rather than to hold so groveling a conception, let us be deluded, if need be, into an assurance that everything on earth, material or immaterial, needs alone the touchstone of an ardent thought, and then shall spring into the outlines of a spiritual reality as new and beautiful to the soul as were the portals and the pinnacles of the palace looming high in air to him who held in his hand the fabled lantern of Aladdin; let us believe what intuition indicates,—that every single fact or form has an import—an importance—no less than that which should be attached to universal truth revealed in miniature.

In accordance with this principle, let us examine the attitude of mind possessed by the leper of our story when desiring the great Master to cure him of his physical disorder, and notice what lessons can be drawn from it with reference to what should be the attitude of mind possessed by those desiring to

be cured of spiritual disorders,—of the disease of sin. In the case of the leper, there are two conceptions of his important to observe,—the first expressed in the words, "thou canst make me clean," and the second in the words, "Lord, if thou wilt."

The words, "thou canst make me clean" gave expression to a form of faith within him founded on evidence,—on what others had said,— on the same kind of evidence that all of us may derive to-day from what we have heard of the influence upon certain persons of whom we know of the truth and the life of Jesus. This faith, and the evidence on which it is founded, is not of the strongest kind, but for men today, as for this leper, it may be sufficiently strong for the immediate purpose. Very likely, there are many of us here present who, could we analyze correctly our own motives, could attribute to a similar form of evidence our own individual belief in whatever spiritual influences we associate with our conceptions of God, of the Christ, or of Christianity. Some of us, however, before we can exercise even this kind of faith, desire something more;—we desire to have the cure needed appear to be not only possible but probable. Is there any way in which it can be made to appear so? This is the question that suggested the line of thought that I am to present this morning.

Sin is a matter of thought, feeling and will, the latter including inclinations and desires. A man is conscious that he is responsible for these as well as for outward acts. How can any influence outside of self change and control both opinions and tendencies,

both thought and will? This seems to be the fundamental question here. In answering it, one can only say, in the first place, that any method of exerting such influence involves a mystery beyond our comprehension. Yet it is no more mysterious than many other things that are done. How can any power make a green, thorny bush, by no means a beautiful object, blossom all over with roses? To do this is just as wonderful as it is to make a character immature and disagreeable exhibit the mature and genial development of a loving, Christian spirit. But, in the second place, altho the general method is above solution, there are some analogies that come within the circle of our experience which may enable us to approach toward a solution. Altho we can not comprehend, they may enable us to apprehend the truth. As a fact, there are many instances in this world in which it is clearly evident that one mind or will has completely mastered, and is controlling, another mind or will. We have most of us heard, probably, of illustrations of this kind of control exerted by what is termed hypnotism, and exerted, too, in connection not only with changes wrought in thought and action, but—what causes it to be suggested by this case of the leper—with effecting cures of physical diseases. That the method is mental is proved by the fact that, when receiving the cures, the patient is often made to see, hear and do, not what his own will, as influenced by actual conditions surrounding him determines, but what the will of the hypnotizer, without reference to the surroundings, determines.

Hypnotism and its cures, however, appear, probably, to most of us more or less unsubstantiated by facts. I am not here to argue the existence of these facts, but merely to say that, inasmuch as many believe in them, they may suggest, at least, a possibility, by and by, of a scientific confirmation of what appear to some to be even as far beyond the reach of rational examination as are the miracles of Jesus. Let us turn from this illustration of the influence of mind upon mind to others that are more apt to appeal to us all, because of a nature more likely to be confirmed by what we have derived from sources deemed less doubtful. If the Apostle Paul could draw illustrations from the gladiatorial contests of his times, I may perhaps be permitted to do so from contests almost as reprehensible in our own times. Anyone who has read about a Spanish bull-fight, will recall with what ease a man, simply on account of superior intelligence, of tact, of skill, can obtain complete mastery over an animal of ten times, perhaps, his own physical strength. Merely by waving from right to left a scarf ten or a dozen feet in length, and turning himself at the proper moment, he can play with the creature as gently and almost as safely as though it were a kitten. Yet all the while the animal wishes to gore the man, and imagines himself about to do it; and the very fact that he wishes this, and imagines that he is about to accomplish it, enables the man to play with him in this manner. The man uses the very thrusts that are made toward him, in order to defeat the object of

the thrusts,—to cause the animal to attack the scarf and not himself. In other words, the man uses the will of the animal for the purpose of thwarting its own design. Thus, as you see, in a realm allied, tho only slightly, to the spiritual, a superior intelligence can allow inferior intelligences to exercise their wills, and can nevertheless make these wills accomplish its own purposes. Again, we occasionally find a successful father or teacher who manages the young according to this analogy, by arousing to curiosity and activity their own better traits, by humoring them sufficiently to allow them to think that they are accomplishing merely their own desires, and developing merely their own mental possibilities. In this way, many a parent and instructor, manifesting that absence of self-assertion, that spirit of self-denial characterizing not only the great but all the approximately great masters, educates, draws out, the spiritual and intellectual activities of those entrusted to his charge, until they acquire inestimably valuable habits of observation and study; and, not only so, but he does this in such a way as to cause them to imagine, all their lives, that they have obtained these habits mainly through their own efforts,—a result which carries with it what proves, sometimes, a very valuable lesson in self-confidence. In other words, superior intelligence, in such cases, has thwarted the purposes of free will so far as wrong, not only from the outside,—i. e., after they have been developed into action,—but also from the inside,—i. e., in the thoughts and feelings which

precede action, which determine what the action shall be.

Of course, the agencies employed when exercising spiritual influence, are intangible and unseen; and for this reason some seem to find it hard to recognize them, or, if recognized, to realize how powerfully they operate at times upon the human spirit. But, if we think a moment, we shall find that, even here, there is not so much difficulty as at first appears. Unseen agencies are not unusual even in material nature; and in this they are often extremely powerful. The most powerful physical agency of which we know is gravitation: and who ever saw the cords that bind the stars together? The most powerful mental agency perhaps is music. To those who can appreciate it, it can bring joy or sadness, smiles or tears, long after every other influence has ceased to affect the feelings. Yet music is the most intangible and spiritual of all the arts. There is nothing to see as in sculpture, no movement to animate as in oratory, no words to inspire as in poetry. One hears sounds only; and these vague sounds are so powerful that a man may be thrilled through and through with the thoughts which, in some way, they suggest. I sometimes think that it is for this reason that music is so often used in the Bible to express symbolically the employment of heaven. It is the only art of which we know that can control one, and, yet, at the same time, leave one free to think his own thoughts and to do his own deeds. All the other arts present the mind with shapes as in sculp-

ture, or colors as in painting, or words as in poetry. These shapes, colors, words, compel thought to some extent,—they indicate that of which one must think. But music addresses itself directly to the feelings; and when it has stirred these, it leaves them to suggest whatever thoughts of joy or of sadness may be nearest to the heart of the man who is under its control. The same strains may affect differently the experience of every one who listens to them. It may make a child think of his play, a youth of his school, a merchant of his business. Now, just like the cords of gravitation, which bind all the stars together and keep them swinging through space in order to fulfil the plans of the Creator, and just like music which controls the feelings of a multitude, and yet leaves each individual free to think and to do what he chooses, so why can not the source of spiritual power above bind all our wills together and keep them moving onward in such a way as to fulfil Divine plans? and so why can not the music of the love above control the feelings of the universe, and yet leave each individual free to think and to do what he chooses? If our wills be inclined to wander from their proper orbits, and to dash through life feverish and restless as the comets, why should there not be there the ability to restore them to their lost position, and to place them where they can be as restful as the planets of the midnight? If our wills have strayed so far away from the music of heaven that we no longer feel its sweet and soothing influences, why should there not be there the power

to awaken anew the harmonies of love, and to arouse a better spirit within us? By exertions of power without, therefore, and of power within; by dealings of Providence which we can see, and of grace which we can not see, when we have become polluted by the presence of sin, we can be made clean.

This the leper acknowledged. But he acknowledged the condition also. "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." It is one thing to feel that the source of spiritual power is able to influence mind as well as matter; and another altogether different thing to feel assured of spiritual willingness to interpose for the benefit of some one who makes the request. And unless one does feel that there is this willingness,—he may, perhaps, never request the favor. Now, how do we know of the existence of this willingness? There are certain arguments which can be drawn from what we term external nature to prove that the creative source of the universe can not but wish well of his creatures. But these arguments are negative at best. They are, perhaps, not positive evidences of his love; not evidences of such a nature as to satisfy a soul that is yearning for help from some source more powerful than can be found on the earth. Such evidences, with the conceptions from which they spring, are recognized by most men to be imparted or revealed through what is termed inspiration. And, according to the Scriptures, such conceptions always have been revealed to all men. They were given to Adam—i. e., to man, to mankind, as originally created—and

the children of Adam, however far they may have wandered into idolatry, seem never to have wholly forgotten them. In fact, the very existence among all nations of religions, priests, temples, ministers, churches, most of them indicative of some traditional belief, seem to prove that it is, in part at least, owing to this that men did find and do find those conceptions that cause them to have faith that God will guide and help and save. Among the Jews, at least, it was the one who had been revealed, who, through signs and wonders wrought in the past, had proven his willingness to assist men,—the God of Abraham,[1] Isaac and Jacob[2] to whom the people were accustomed to pray: and now when this leper came crying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," it was Jesus, the inspired Master, sent to reveal and represent the love of God, who answered, "I will, be thou clean." Is there one of us here who does not wish that these words could come to every one present in this Church today as though he himself heard them from the lips of the Master? We all know about spiritual power, especially about that which we have a right to attribute to the divine spirit. There was no need, perhaps, that I should have dwelt upon it as long as I did. That which holds in hand our destinies for this life and for the life to come, can make us clean. Will it be done? Is there willingness to cure the disease of sin? Hear the testimony of Jesus: "I will, be thou clean." See the deeds of Jesus,—his self-

[1] Gen. 32 : 9. [2] Mat. 22 : 32.

denying kindness, his self-sacrificing death. All through his life to the moment of his final departure, and all through the history of the world that has been growing wiser and better ever since, so far as it has embodied belief in him and in the principles that he proclaimed, we can hear the emphatic repetition of the words, "I will: be thou clean." The Father in Heaven, according to the Master, is able and willing to answer requests. But is he willing to answer all requests?

This, the leper did not know. He said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst." Is it not a source of comfort that the revelation that we have assures us that prayer is acceptable which does not express assurance?—that the doubtful words "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst," were answered. But it is well to heed the fact that the expression of this condition, "Lord, if thou wilt," the acknowledgment of spiritual power superior to one's own, was also included in the request. You and I desire health, influence, regeneration, for ourselves or for our friends. If we frame these desires into a prayer, can we obtain that for which we pray,—now or at all? We can not know this; but, even if we doubt it, our doubt need not hinder our prayer; we can say at least, "Lord, if thou wilt." More than this, our doubt may help us to pray aright. Were we more confident of an answer, we might not be inclined to feel, or to acknowledge, the necessary condition,—the fact that, after all, the designs of a power above ourselves, and not our own desires, should be chiefly

consulted. Even Jesus, as you remember, ended his prayer before the crucifixion with the words, "Not my[1] will, but thine be done."

The leper, as I have said, acknowledged the power above him,—"Thou canst make me clean," and also the condition, "If thou wilt." There are other questions that may suggest themselves—"Why was any acknowledgment at all needed?—why was not this leper cured without one?—why are we not all cured of sin, without any prayers, without any acknowledgment of any power or of any will above our own? Possibly, many answers might be given to these questions. It is in place at this time to suggest but one, and that the one indicated in our text. This world might have been made without there being placed in it any creatures of intelligence. But there was added to creation as its crowning feature, a rational and free being, a man. Things that are moved by the power of gravitation or by the blind instincts of nature can glorify that which produced them without any exercise of thought or will. But minds can glorify their mental source only by apprehending its power and by acknowledging the wisdom of its directions;—in other words, only by apprehending the fact "Thou canst," and by acknowledging that the limit to the ability of God exists, and ought to exist in the exercise of his own will,—"If thou wilt." If I be a man of truth, one who loves it in itself, and also the exhibition of it, I may argue with you all night, in case I am an orator, and spend a

[1] Luke 22: 42.

great many nights elaborating it, in case I am a poet, in order to make you perceive the truth in all of its relations just as I do. It is not always the selfish ambition to convince you that I am an orator or a poet that impels me, but sometimes the desire, and the lawful desire, to have you apprehend the intrinsic fitness and beauty of that truth which I have to impart. Just so, through Providence and grace, God seems to be doing all that he can, if I may so express it, to have us apprehend and acknowledge his wisdom and his love,—the truth of his nature, which is infinitely worthy of our worship. In other words, it is the heart of the Creator craving for the sympathy of his creatures which speaks to us through the religious influences that he has brought to bear upon the earth. He can do with us whatsoever he desires, but he wishes to have us willing to let him do with us what he desires. He wishes to have us recognize his characteristics, and to acknowledge the right of his character to control us. The church, you know, is called the Bride. Through the dealings of his providence and through the mission of Jesus and the spirit that he brought to the world, it is intimated that the Maker desires to woo mankind to himself, to the free yet perfect submission which marks the bearing of a bride faithful to her husband. God was said to be in Christ reconciling the world to himself, to his character. When the grand doxology of those redeemed upon earth shall swell amid the arches of heaven, is it not natural, as well as scriptural, to

suppose that he who receives it desires to have it the expression of no ignorant, blind, childish superstition; but of intelligent, clear-sighted, manly faith, of faith which has passed through great tribulation, it may be; through struggles with doubt and despair; but of faith which has been taught by the discipline of earth to feel that it is the highest achievement of human intellect to apprehend the power of God; and the highest effort of human wisdom to become submissive to his will. Thus shall he receive worship which shall be a worthy tribute from a being endowed with mind, whose thought is logical and whose will is free.

And you and I, friends, if we would live the life of truth, the life which we were designed to live; if we would become subjects of the spiritual kingdom; if we would ask favors of its sovereign in such a way as to insure an answer, what must we do?—What else than learn to say, like the leper, "Thou canst, if thou wilt,"—than to learn to express this in our words, think it in our minds, and feel it in our hearts?—our whole lives embodiments of the idea that in God[1] "we live and move and have our being?"—He who has all power can assist us. He who is all love will assist us, if he deem it best. Thus in each of us shall life become not only as orderly as that of nature, but as perfect and as beautiful; and in the heaven above, when the veil shall be drawn from before the throne, when we perhaps shall see him face to face, we, who attend those

[1] Acts 17 : 28.

grand ceremonials, shall, perhaps, be advanced into a condition of progress where we shall have robes that are beautiful enough, and voices that are sweet enough, and hearts that are pure enough, and characters that are noble enough, to render ourselves an additional attraction to the sublime glory of the spectacle of the "ten thousand times[1] ten thousand and thousands of thousands saying with a loud voice, blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne."

[1] Rev. 5 : 11, 13.

III

PERSONAL FAITH AS GROUNDED ON PERSONAL OBSERVATION

"Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works' sake."—John 14: 11.

There are two avenues of approach to the human will,—the heart and the head. Through these avenues the appeal to human action is made according to two different methods,—through personal influence and through proof. As our Lord discoursed with his disciples he said, "If ye had known me ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord show us the Father and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long a time with you, and yet hast thou not known me Philip?" —appealing, as you perceive, to his listener's heart, and this, through calling attention to his own personal character—"Have I been so long a time with you and yet hast thou not known me Philip?" But our Lord did not stop here. He did not affirm, nor even imply, that Philip, because he had not recognized in his companion the qualities and the authority of one who had a divine mission—that therefore he was reprobate, beyond redemption; not at all.

Jesus merely repeated once more his former method of appeal. Philip, believe me, for what I am—for the character which I have maintained before you, because I, of whom you know so much, tell you it, that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else, otherwise, if this seem not sufficient ground for you, believe me for the very works' sake. If your heart will not respond to the appeal of my personal influence, if the flame of love burn not so brightly as to kindle in you confidence in my statement, simply because it is made by me, then let your intellect acknowledge the results that I have achieved; let that which I have accomplished exert its legitimate effect upon you. Believe on account of the words of one whom you love, or else believe on account of the works that you have seen him do,—believe "for the very works' sake."

Probably the majority of those surrounding our Lord at this time had grown into a belief in the divinity of his mission and the world-wide purpose of it, by degrees imperceptible, perhaps, even to themselves. They had been called to be disciples at a time and in a manner, which appeared to them like results of the merest accident. They had followed him who summoned them, impelled far more, it may be, by curiosity than by conscience. They had moved about with him through Galilee and through Judea. They had been witnesses of his marvelous ability to heal the sick, and even, as they thought, to handle the forces of nature, till they had cried, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea

obey him!"[1] They had listened with awe to his still more marvelous discourses. They had been astonished at the penetration of his insight, been moved to tears by the considerateness of his sympathy, and been made to tremble at the justice of his indignation. At last they had bowed before him, as before one speaking with an authority not recognized in any other teacher. And all this before the time had come for the full announcement of the divine character of his mission. Then Peter, James and John had seen what is termed the transfiguration. All the rest had followed him with exultation as, over thick-strewn garments and beneath waving palms, he had marched along the road from Bethany, and had entered in triumph through the gateway of the holy city, welcomed by the cry "Hosanna[2] to the son of David, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" And now the shadow of his last trial loomed over him, the eve of his crucifixion had arrived. The reason for events that threatened must be explained to his disciples. "In my Father's house," he said, "are many mansions,[3] I go to prepare a place for you." The most of his followers made ready for this announcement through the training to which they had been almost unconsciously subjected—through that apprehension of the character of Jesus which had been imprest upon them—could accept the statement implicitly. But Philip said, "Show us the Father,[4] and it sufficeth us."

1 Mat. 8 : 27. [2] Mat. 21 : 9. [3] Jno. 14 : 2. [4] Jno. 14 : 9.

The twelve surrounding Jesus at the time of this occurrence, and Philip craving an appeal to his own soul beyond that of the assertion which satisfied his fellows, are typical of the Church in every age, and of some individual moods in every community. Probably the majority of church people grow into a belief in the Christian system just as unconsciously as did the majority of our Lord's immediate followers. They find themselves among the disciples worshipping at a time and in a manner that cause their presence there to appear like a result of the merest accident. Their parents or their friends have introduced them, and they continue to attend the weekly services mainly as a matter of custom, if not of curiosity. There they listen, Sunday after Sunday, to the story of the crucified Master, and of his wonderful influence upon individuals and communities. They are urged to duty by an appeal to their gratitude, and warned from sin by a description of the danger following it. They are drawn into sympathy with Christian life by witnessing its effects in the characters of one or more of their associates, and kept from wandering into ways of vice by the pure standards of those with whom they enjoy Christian fellowship. At last, their spirits, hampered by a consciousness of the limits of earthly relationships, and sighing for an assurance of acceptance into a holier household, seem to hear the voice of Jesus saying to themselves, "In my Father's house" above "are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you"; and, almost instinctively, with scarcely a question

further, because they feel it to be in accordance with all the other trustworthy testimony that they have received, because they feel it to be the truth for which their spirits have begun to yearn, and must continue to yearn, they accept it. Jesus Christ is their own personal Lord and Master, representative of love divine and human, mediator between themselves and one who is their judge and sovereign, the brother of a common race who pleads for their humanity upon the threshold of a common father's home. And if it be that true life is that which lives up to the light that it possesses, if it be that true light is that life of Jesus lighting every man that cometh into the world,[1] if it be that every man thus lighted may hold the indwelling Christ within himself—a light embodied in a medium so transparent that its shining[2] may make others also glorify the Father that is in heaven—what more natural and rational than that the child of Christian parents and the associate of Christian friends should accompany both to the communion of the church as instinctively as to the household board where the lamps are lighted and the hearth burns brightly! Sympathy—this is the motive power of religion, the spirit of the Christ embodied in the fellow-man to be to the world now something akin to what the same spirit embodied in the Master was to the fishermen of Galilee. So most men, I say, are drawn into an acceptance of Christian truth, and of all Christian truth, through the example and testimony of those whom they love

[1] Jno. 1 : 9. [2] Mat. 5 : 16.

—if not through those of the Master himself, as in the case of his earliest followers, at least, through those of the Christians of today who are his living representatives.

But now and then there is a Philip not satisfied with this. He says, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us." What is to be done with him? Ought he to be rebuked? Yes, perhaps; but not too harshly. "Have I been so long time with you," said Jesus, "and yet hast thou not known me Philip?" Believe me for what I am. Nevertheless, if you can not, there is hope for you yet; "believe me for the very works' sake." If my personal testimony will not suffice, then let facts appeal to you. There are some in every community, as I have said—one meets them constantly—upon whom the ordinary presentations of the claims of Jesus to love, faith and obedience seem to have little effect. It is well for them occasionally to have the gospel presented where its claims shall come within the range of their own chosen points of view. Whatever be the case with any one of you before me, it will not harm you to know that we have the authority of Jesus himself for saying that men may be brought to religion, to belief in Christianity, just as well through their own observation as through the testimony of others; through the works of the founder as through his words; through his achievements as through his authority; starting with a consideration of his humanity and his influence over human affairs, as by starting with a consideration of his relation to divinity

and the divine purposes. There is no need of holding that narrow view of the influence of the Great Master, which supposes that, in accepting him, men must begin by giving a full acknowledgment of all the claims that, with justification or without justification, have, at different times and places, been made for him. There is a larger view of this subject, and one which, as I think, indicates far more practical knowledge of human nature, as well as far more complete confidence in the wisdom of the heavenly Father's methods. It is a view which gives thankful acknowledgment to the slightest appreciation of the character of Jesus on the part of any one, and which firmly believes in the power embodied in that character to draw[1] to himself those who come within the remotest outside reach of his influence; believes in his power to cure the supplicants whose hesitating hands dare extend no nearer nor higher than to touch the trailing hem of his garment.[2] This seems to be the truth implied in our text.

Let us ask what are the works that the Philips and the churches of our own day may recall when musing on a text like that before us. It is true that we have not seen what were termed the miracles, but have we not perceived the results of an exercise of power well nigh as wonderful? The life of Jesus on the earth was short and insignificant, compared with that which has continued his influence upon all the ages since his own. Gaze back upon the stream of history—you know the facts as well as I—where it

[1] Jno. 12 : 32. [2] Mat. 9 : 20.

flows clear and bright through pleasant regions with the germs of peace and plenty springing up on every side, there, in some measure, have mankind embodied in themselves the love of neighbors which he enjoined, broken yokes, and let the opprest go free; but where the stream is clogged by stagnant marshes, where the banks are barren, where the air reeks with the stench of death, and winds are laden with wild cries of those who flee and lose themselves in gloom, there earth has never known, or has forgotten, Christianity. Recall the course, as well, through which what men call culture has advanced. Where were the masses educated first, and why? Where, and because, there was a Bible to be read, instructing men in morals, that the state might be preserved from vice, instructing them in religion that the church might be preserved from superstition. It was the reformation of the church that unlocked the library of the University to every one of every race, and brought the general enlightenment that characterizes modern civilization. Indeed, from the lowest to the highest stages in the spheres of thought, the actions and reactions, the assaults and the defenses of the wars that have furthered on the victories of intelligence, would, perhaps, never have been undertaken at all, had it not been for devotion to the truths associated with that religion which so many seemed to be neglecting and opposing. Consider again the advance in individual character, due to the same influence. It has taught the world of industry, for "if any man would not work neither should he

eat."[1] It has taught of recreation, too; men must "remember the day of rest and keep it."[2] It has taught of virtue, for "neither[3] fornicators nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor abusers of themselves, nor thieves, nor coveteous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the Kingdom of God." It has taught of social courtesy. "Husbands[4] must love their wives,"[5] "children obey their parents," and "each[6] esteem others better than themselves." But more than this, going deeper into human nature, it has passed below all outward forms and taught the soul of self-denial and self-sacrifice for others. "Walk in love[7] even as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself an offering and a sacrifice." It has taught the exercise of the same feeling toward God. See, then, that ye "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God," which, in view of all that he is and has done for you, "is you reasonable[8] service." Yes; Christianity in urging this devotion has made it all reasonable. The soul is not torn away from the earth to lose all the surroundings which afford it sympathy and strength. It is joined to a new and a better earth, where fortunes fail not, and where friends can never die, where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes,[9] and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain"; and, buoyed up by the faith and hope and consolation that these assurances afford, all the

[1] 2 Thes. 3 : 19. [2] Ex. 20 : 8-11. [3] 1 Cor. 6 : 9, 10. [4] Eph. 5 : 25.
[5] Eph. 6 : 1. [6] Phil. 2 : 3. [7] Eph. 5 : 2. [8] Rom. 12 : 1. [9] Rom. 21 : 4.

world beholds the Christian resisting the currents of temptation, riding the waves of sorrow securely as a sailor in his life-boat, till lost from the view of that humanity, still left to struggle after him, behind the looming outlines of the eternal shore. "Believe me," said Jesus, "for the very works' sake."

There is an additional idea in this expression. Believe me not alone because the works manifest my power, but because the works are powerful aside from me. If you fail to believe in Christianity through the Christ—then believe in the Christ through Christianity. Sympathize with its works that, in this way, you may come to sympathy with its source. This idea seems to be implied clearly in the verse following: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and[1] greater works than these shall he do because I go unto my Father." Your attention has already been directed to the fact that Christianity, through the influence of its followers has done greater, far greater, service to the world than did its founder while living. The Master seems to mean to say to Philip, "Doubt me if you must, but do not, because you can not, doubt that positive power which you have seen and shall see exerted through me. Let this, at least, have its legitimate effect upon you."

And is there not force in this method of presenting the subject? Is there not something in the method to appeal to every one of us today? Do we

[1] Jno. 14 : 12.

not all believe, at least, that it is our duty to act up to the light that we have? And is there one here who doubts that the truths proclaimed by Jesus are the very best fitted to procure peace in the state, enlightment in society, morality in the family, or contentment in the individual? Let me put it differently. Did Christianity—I mean, not its superstitious, bigoted, hypocritical phases, but the genuine article whose origin is faith, whose essence is love, whose expression is charity, whose service is self-sacrifice —did it ever do any harm to one who tried to conform his life to its principles? Would it make one's own family more miserable, one's children grow up worse? And if it would not, if it would do the reverse, why not accept it for its works? If you can not see God seated on his throne, no reason why you should refuse to recognize the power of God here on the earth, tho millions of miles, perhaps, away from his throne. If you can not see the Christ crowned as your spirit's Sovereign, no reason why you should refuse to enter the gates of the Celestial City, if only the prospects within seem more full of promise than those without. Only by and by, perhaps, shall you be near enough it to behold the palace and enter into its halls of state. This is the natural and rational way to act. If you see good, follow it. If the cause of Christianity seems ennobling, advance it. If the Church or Sunday School seem to enhance intelligence and virtue, support it, attend it, enter yourself into the work that it has to do. I would, and I will—because I can—go further with some of you.

If because you belong to God anyway, it seem the wisest thing possible for you to submit yourself entirely to the influence of his law and authority, then give yourself to him wholly, "a living sacrifice." And if, during his earthly ministry, the Great Master seem to have done this very thing, and, in so doing, to have exhibited the complete subjection of his spirit to God, acknowledge, for yourself, that he was controlled by the Spirit of God, and so was the embodiment of that Spirit, no matter whether you consider him, at first, the highest development of humanity, or only as the lowest development of divinity. When he says that one should "deny himself[1] take up his cross and follow" him, do it. Follow him just as you might have done in ancient Galilee, had you heard that gentle voice, and seen that noble character. He went about doing good. Follow him on such a mission. He said, "Love[2] the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength and mind and thy neighbor as thyself . . this do and thou shalt live." Do this. Ah, friends, I can not think that you can try, sincerely, constantly to do this very long, before you will find that you are weak and wayward; that you can not keep perfectly this law of God. Then, when you feel this, I think you will begin to wish for evidence to convince you that the God above has attributes besides the one of justice; that the God above is one who will overlook our human ignorance and frailty; and, when you feel this, I believe that the manifestation of his char-

[1] Mark 8 : 34. [2] Luke 10 : 27, 28.

acter revealed in Jesus Christ will appear exactly fitted for your needs. I believe that you will begin to think that the life and suffering of Jesus were not superfluous, but were intended for exactly such conditions as that in which you find yourself. I believe that you will have renewed strength to move forward afforded you by the hope of immortality brought to light in his revelation, and in the support of his spirit assured to all in his parting words. Yes, when you arrive at these conclusions, after earnest efforts to embody in your life all truth so far as you perceive it, I believe that you will find out that that promise is fulfilled in your own case, that if any man will "do his will he shall know of the doctrine"[1]—I am in the Father and the Father in me—"whether it be of God." Yes, I am convinced that if, for the very work's sake alone, you begin to trust, and to follow the Christ, you will end by believing him because, in some way, the Father seems to be in him and he in the Father. At any rate, give no excuse for your lack of Christian character, such as this—that you doubt some of the doctrines of the church. Where does the Bible blame any one because of doubting some of these? So far as I can recall, it blames only for dishonest refusal to live true to what is not doubted—"whatsoever is not of faith"[2] —is contrary to the faith that one has—"is sin." "To him that knoweth[3] to do good and doeth it not, to him, it is sin." Well, now, does no sin lie at your door, according to this test? Do you believe that

[1] Jno. 7 : 17. [2] Rom. 14 : 23. [3] James 4 : 17.

Christianity is a power for good? Do you believe in its works? If so, have you allied yourself with it? Do you try to be what you respect? Do you live up to your light? If not, whose fault will it be when you get there? Nay, when, perhaps, you do not get there. For if the beacons be glimmering ever so little, and you do not steer for them, whose fault will it be, if you never reach the celestial city? Will it be any excuse to say that you were waiting—here where no one has any right to expect anything but glimmers—till the celestial city, with all the blaze of certainty, came over the storm to you?

IV

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER DETERMINED BY CONDUCT, NOT KNOWLEDGE

"How readest thou? . . . This do and thou shalt live."—Luke 10: 26, 28.

In the context of the paragraph chosen for consideration this morning, we are told that during or after one of our Lord's discourses, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him,—i. e., tested him, questioned him in order, probably, to entrap him into some statement that the people in general would not accept. The lawyer asked the Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? Undoubtedly, he expected as a reply something like this: "Believe in me" or "Obey the truth that I proclaim," in which case the lawyer supposed very rightly, perhaps, that those about him would declare the answer presumptuous, the one uttering it a usurper of authority, an opponent of the ancient ceremonial, a preacher of heresy, an exhorter to schism. But the Master said nothing of the sort. He simply turned upon his questioner and asked: what is written in the law; how readest thou? The adroitness of this reply is no less apparent than is its originality. Few religious teachers, in similar circumstances, would have

answered in this way. Were you to put the same question to your friend, the philosophic theologian, do you think that he would suggest that you yourself already know the answer,—that he would ask you how you read the law? Would he not rather argue with you to prove to you how right was his reading of the law? Were you to ask your friend, the emotional, enthusiastic revivalist, do you imagine that he would convey the impression that you yourself could begin to apprehend one-half of what should be the right answer to the question? Or were you to ask your friend, the more practical reformer, always preaching that one should show his faith by works, do you think that he would ask you how you read the law? Very few of these people would give this reply, to say nothing of those from whom we should expect something different as a matter of course, like the fanatic trying to enforce new readings of his own upon us, or the traditionalist questioning our right to read at all, because, forsooth, he fears that we may have not yet acquired that prejudice which will invariably keep the doors of thought closed to a new suggestion.

Yet this reply was in accordance with the Master's usual method. Once, as you may remember, when the Jews gathered around him, saying "How long[1] dost thou make us to doubt, if thou be the Christ tell us plainly," he merely answered, "The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. When the high priest said to him, "I

[1] Jno. 10 : 24.

adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ,"[1] his only reply was, "Thou hast said," in other words, this is what common report calls me. Even when John, his forerunner, who was in prison, and had a right, if any one, to know the exact truth, sent a messenger asking, "Art thou he that should come,[2] or do we look for another," he merely answered, "Go and show John again the things which ye do see and hear." Each reply, as you notice, was characterized by a lack of assertion,—by an appeal to the mind encouraging it to think the matter out for itself,—by confidence in the reasoning power with which God has endowed man—a confidence entirely absent wherever there is an attempt of dogmatism to dictate a form of belief to a man not allowed to think, lest he may cease to be a bigot.

The answer of the lawyer in the case that we are considering, proved the wisdom of the Master's appeal to human judgment. The lawyer did know what to do. He replied in the very words that the Master himself would have used: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself. And Jesus said unto him, thou hast answered right; this do and thou shalt live."

But the lawyer, as we are told, was still unsatisfied. Willing to justify himself, so it is said; in other words, intent to prove, if possible, that, after all, he

[1] Mat. 26 : 63, 64. [2] Mat. 11 : 3-5.

did not know what he should do; and that his ignorance, and not his neglect of duty, was the cause of whatever deficiency there was in his life; willing to justify himself, he went on to ask, "And who is my neighbor?" It was a very ordinary cavil, this. Nothing is more common than to hear men shift the responsibility for neglect of any kind from their hearts to their heads, or, what is the same thing, from themselves to those by whom they may be supposed to have been instructed.

This second question, who is my neighbor? did not benefit the lawyer's logical position any more than the first. In reply, Jesus told him the story of the Good Samaritan, and then asked which of the characters mentioned in the story was the neighbor of the man who fell among thieves? And, as we shall find, the lawyer in his reply proved that this question, also, had been wisely submitted to his judgment. Jesus said to him again, "Go, and do thou likewise."

There are two important truths indicated by the methods adopted by the Master in this controversy. Let us consider them for a little. The first truth, already suggested, is that a man can not inherit eternal life, or manifest love for God and for man, by merely getting knowledge. The second truth is that he can do both by living the right sort of a life. Notice how the parable, in addition to the questions of Jesus, enforces these truths. We are told that a certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his rai-

ment and wounded him, and departed leaving him half dead. Now, mark you, what followed: "By chance there came down a certain priest that way." The priest, as most of us know, was, among the Jews, the highest official of religion. As such, he was undoubtedly selected in the story because a representative of one possessing the highest knowledge of the law and its requirements. What did the priest do? When he saw the man who had fallen among thieves, he passed by on the other side. All his knowledge about religion had failed to cause his life to be religious. The parable then goes on to tell us about a Levite. The Levites were the members of the tribe from which the priests were selected. They were not necessarily priests, altho they might become such. But they were supported by the general fund set apart for worship, and were employed, if not in the chief, in the subordinate positions connected with the administration of the temple-service. Being associated with the priests, and yet not so high in office, they may be taken as representatives of those having a somewhat inferior knowledge of the law and its requirements, and yet a knowledge superior to that of most of the people. What did the Levite do? Notwithstanding his lesser knowledge, he acted better than the priest. When he was at the place he "came and looked" at the man. But that was all; after this he, too, "passed by on the other side." As some one has said, he found the man had been robbed already.

Contrasted with the conduct of the priest and of

the Levite, our attention is now directed to that of a certain Samaritan, who, as he was journeying, came where the man was. The Samaritans were inhabitants of the country which lay between Judea and Galilee. They were a mixed race, being partly descended from the Jews who were left in Palestine during the time when the majority of its people were taken into captivity at Babylon, and partly descended from the Gentiles of the neighborhood with whom these Jews left in Palestine intermarried. During the time of the captivity, because prohibited from visiting Jerusalem, these Samaritans had erected a temple in Mt. Gerizim; and after the return from captivity of the rest of the Jews they had continued to worship in this place rather than in Jerusalem. They had done so in part out of respect for their own immediate ancestors, and in part out of hostility to those of their race in Jerusalem who despised and avoided them on account of their being descended in part from Gentiles. Five hundred years of such antipathy had made the feud between the two sections of the country violent in the extreme. You may recall what the woman of Samaria said to Jesus, expressing astonishment that he should converse with her at all. She reminded him that the Jews had no dealings[1] with the Samaritans. Now it was one of these latter—one who, according to Jewish opinion, was wholly uninstructed with reference to the law and its requirements—whose fulfilment of the law the Master set against the non-

[1] Jno. 4 : 9.

fulfilment of the same on the part of two of the most carefully instructed of the chosen race. "A certain Samaritan, as he was journeying, came where the man was, and when he," the Samaritan, "saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed he took out two pence and gave them to the host, and said unto him, 'Take care of him and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.'" It was after telling this parable that the Master turned to the lawyer and said, "Which now of these three thinkest thou was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?—and he said: 'He that showed mercy on him.' Then said Jesus unto him, 'Go and do thou likewise.'" In these words the Master added a positive lesson to the negative one already presented in the parable. The negative lesson was this: knowledge can not make one inherit eternal life. You, lawyer, fully versed in all the law of Moses and the Talmud, you have knowledge enough. Even now you, yourself, have given me all the information that I would have given you, had I chosen to do so, instead of merely questioning you, yourself. But mere knowledge about the law is not life according to the law. The priest and the Levite, with all their learning, may neglect the claims of humanity, which is the same thing as neglecting the claims of God, who is imaged in every human being. But the ignorant Samaritan,

who has no learning such as theirs, may live according to the law, because he may love his neighbor as himself. Go and do thou likewise.

There is nothing in literature more simple and sensible in the truth that it enforces, or sublime and stimulating in the charity that it illustrates, than is this parable of the good Samaritan. A hundred years ago the poet Lessing wrote in Germany a drama exalting the character of a Jew. It raised a storm of criticism on the part of theological, high Lutheran critics, not because "Nathan the Wise" (as he was termed) was good in the sense of being humane, but was good in the sense of manifesting the distinctive traits of the Christian. The world today accounts for this sort of criticism by saying that Lessing wrote beyond his age. But here, seventeen centuries before the time of Lessing, Jesus Christ was teaching the same lesson in this parable. The good Samaritan was not alone sincere. The point of the parable is that he was religious, judging him according to the statements quoted by the lawyer from the revealed law of God. If the Master had not clearly brought out this fact the lawyer, who had quoted the words, would have had another cavil to present. But apparently he had nothing more to say. Probably he was astonished at the charity of the Master, just as some of us may be when we come to think about it; and yet this charity, in a time of bigotry like that in which the Master lived, a charity surpassing even that which prevails to any great extent in our own time, furnishes one of the strong-

est proofs conceivable of the eternal, and by consequence, the divine fitness of his character to be a model and a guide for all the ages. Moreover, we should err did we not suppose that his immediate followers understood the full bearing of His teachings upon this subject. "When the Gentiles," says the Apostle Paul, in Rom. 2:14, "when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves." Is not that plain enough? When they "do by nature." There is nothing more prejudicial to truth than to suppose that what a man is taught by revelation, or by grace, or by the Spirit, or by any other influence involving a more immediate agency of God, is out of analogy with that which is taught by nature. God is one God, and his truth is one, however manifested. Light is always light, in a candle, a chandelier, a star, a moon, or a sun. There may be differences in degrees of truth, but not necessarily in kind; and the man who walks better and faster in the darkest night, by aid of a lantern, than you or I do under the guidance of a mid-day sun, will reach his destination first. If in the full blaze of Christendom we be stumbling and loitering on the path, I dare to point you to many a struggling soul only as yet in the twilight, and say "Go and do thou likewise." Action is the object of obtaining information; conduct the reason for trying to understand. Let us not be afraid, in part at least, to trace right results, wherever found, to right in their sources. The lawyer to whom this parable was told

had just as much reason to discredit this Samaritan, even on account of his fulfilment of the law, as have some church people of today to discredit those who are better men and women than themselves because, as is said, they are merely moral. It is a great thing to be moral, in any way, and it involves a very narrow conception of the influence of God to suppose that he has nothing to do with making a man merely so. Rather, like the Apostle Paul in the passage quoted, and like the great Master, himself, in this parable, let us lay claim in his name to all the fruits of his righteousness wherever they appear. They will not harm the church except where she is without fruit, and then she needs to be harmed. They will not lessen men's regard for Him who is the head of the church because, according to this conception, it is his loving spirit that is working at the root of character whenever fruits like these are found. Let us cling to the church as the guardian and instructor of religious life. We can never learn too much or become too wise in spiritual knowledge. Expanding our intelligence is our best human method of enlarging the soul. But the two results are not by any means synonymous. To know is not to be, to say is not to do. Rather than to think this, let us learn of the Samaritan, however far we may consider him outside our own spiritual circle, or beneath our own rank. We may pity him for whatever there may be in him of poverty, of ignorance, of superstition. We may labor, too, that he may be enlightened. But let us also remember that wher-

ever we find disinterested kindness, meekness, fidelity, honor, we are coming into contact with traits that show a near or remote touch of divine influence. Let us thank God for them. Let us thank him for the Spirit of Christ manifested in them, as we would amid darkness for some single ray of sunshine, and no more, perhaps, streaming down through filth and cobwebs to the floor of some poor cellar. Let us praise him for that glory dropt from heaven like a pearl from off its gates to sanctify that hovel. Let us open anew the portals of the church, and cry to all that "The spirit[1] and the bride say come." Let us believe that as many as are led[2] by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God, whether or not they, themselves, may acknowledge it, or know it. This is the essence of religion—to look upon God as our Father[3] and by consequence upon every fellow-being as our brother; therefore, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind, and our neighbor as ourself, because he holds the same relation to God that we do. It was this principle that the Samaritan had the charity of mind and kindness of heart to embody in his deeds. His love for his neighbor was the surest sign that could be given of his love for that God whose child this neighbor was. And the lesson for each of us, as well as for the lawyer, is this: Go thou, go to those who have fallen among thieves of fortune, or of character, men stript of raiment or of reputation, wounded in body or in soul, go thou to those in need of succor

[1] Rev. 22 : 17. [2] Rom. 8 : 14. [3] Eph. 5 : 1, 2.

or of sympathy, with helping hands and hearty words and patient deeds and unfaltering benevolence, go wherever there is anything to be done for man or for God, in the church or in the world—done temporally or spiritually, with words or with wealth, —go and do thou likewise.

This whole hearted, unequivocal acceptance, without other explanation or hedging of the principle taught by this parable, may seem, as I have said, strange to some of us, and even dangerously liberal. Yet notice its accordance with other parts of the Scriptures. This do and thou shalt live, is a principle expressed in these almost everywhere. Notice Deut. 6:25: "It shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God as he hath commanded us;" also Ezekiel 20:11, "and I gave them my statutes and showed them my judgment, which if a man do he shall even live in them"; also Ps. 15:1, 2, "Lord, who shall abide in thy Tabernacle, who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness and speaketh the truth in his heart"; also Amos 5:14, "Seek good and not evil that ye may live"; also John 13:17, "If ye know these things happy are ye if ye do them"; also Rev. 22:12, "Behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me to give to every man as his work shall be." Here are statements of this doctrine taken from the law, the prophets, the poets, the gospels, the epistles, the apocalypse.

The same doctrine is taught, strange as this, too,

may seem to some of you, in every one of our Protestant churches. Though looking on one side of the question, all may be tempted occasionally to accept with poetic license, and to sing with pious fervor a verse like

> Nothing either great or small
> Remains for me to do,
> Jesus died and paid it all,
> All the debt I owe;

nevertheless, every one of these churches holds that for salvation something more than merely "nothing" is necessary. The Episcopalians call it, perhaps, new-obedience. The Methodists and Baptists, "getting religion." The Presbyterians and Congregationalists, "conversion." What do they mean by these terms except to imply what, sometimes, some of their membership fail to express, namely, that to begin to live the life of the Christ is synonymous with beginning to do something. But what is there that a man must begin to do? Is it merely to come to church, to read a Bible, to pray, to wear a long face? No; because a man may do every one of these things and not be a better neighbor in the sense of a friend, a citizen, a helper. Besides, he may do them all externally without feeling them internally, hating them and not loving them, with the body and not with the spirit; and God, who is the Lord of the spirit, looks upon that. Now, how shall one begin to do these, or any like, or better, things, with the spirit? How but by beginning to love them! Not, mind you, by beginning to take delight in them. We, by no means, always take delight, even

in what we do from love. A mother may love a child when she punishes it. To do a thing from love is to do it because we feel that, by doing it, we can benefit some fellow-being. It gratifies our spirits because it makes us conscious that we are doing a spirit's fitting work. A man loves God and his neighbor when he desires to do the best that he can for them and with them. This is what the Samaritan tried to do. And to recognize that it is what we should all try to do is the remedy for the dangers attendant upon preaching a system of salvation according to the injunction of the text, "This do and thy soul shall live." It makes all the difference in the world what we do. If we take the context and find out that the thing we are to do is to love, there is no danger of our forgetting in the midst of any of our deeds what is due to the Lord Jesus, and to the mercy of God.

But some one may say, perhaps, that I have not referred to the atonement. Have I not? I think that I have, tho as it was indirect, you may not have recognized the reference. What is the atonement? As the word indicates, it is an *at-one-ment*, a means of causing man and God to be at one—reconciling the world to God, as the Bible says (2d Cor. 5:19) and bringing the two together. The Christian Church claims that this was done by the work of the Divine Messenger and Representative, Jesus, the Christ; and it is a claim that can be substantiated by historic fact, by the history of the growth and influence of Christianity during the last eighteen centuries. But I want you to notice that the atonement

is a means and not an end. The end is love for God and man in the individual heart and the faith that accompanies love. But, perhaps, you are not satisfied yet. You say the death of the Christ took the place of the sacrifice of the lamb in the old Jewish dispensation, and, even according to the new dispensation, we are told that "the blood of Jesus Christ,[1] his Son, cleanseth from all sin." Very well, I believe and accept that statement. But let me remind you, first, that sacrifice under the old dispensation was not enjoined as a mere form. The people were told to offer the sacrifices of righteousness (Ps. 4:5); that "to obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Sam. 15: 22); in other words, let me remind you that sacrifice was symbolical and meant something. With these suggestions in mind, let us examine this passage, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John, 1:7). What does the passage mean? In view of our subject this morning, it is easy enough to know what it does not mean. If Jesus had put his question, "How readest thou?" to the lawyer, or to any person of ordinary intelligence and common sense, and this person had answered that one could inherit eternal life by listening to an eloquent sermon describing the crucifixion, by hearing music, by seeing a procession, by having water put on him, by partaking of bread or wine, by inhaling incense, the Master, by extracting such an answer from such a person, might almost be said to have performed the greatest of all his miracles.

[1] Jno. 1 : 7.

Only years and centuries of false teaching could enable any rational mind to suppose that eternal life could be assured by such methods. All these or any forms of religious service may be influential, but prove spiritually effective in only the degree in which they reach the spirit in which one does all things.

So much as to what this passage does not mean. Now as to what it does mean. The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin. Suppose as applied to it, I try to answer the question, "How readest thou?" The first thing that I do in reading is to recognize that the language is figurative. There is, today, no real blood of Christ. If there were, neither it, nor any other kind of blood, would cleanse; it would stain; and if it could cleanse, it would not cleanse from all sin, because all sin by no means produces the kind of physical defilement that needs cleansing. The words are figurative. What do they figure or represent, then? To determine this, let us translate the figurative into literal language. For *blood*, *Jesus* and *sin*, let us substitute *water*, *river* and *soil*. The water of the river cleanseth from all soil. There is language that we can understand, and treat literally. Let us ask, when is it that the water of the river cleanseth from all soil? Is it when it is flowing in the river? No; when it is applied to the hands or the body. The blood of the victim that was sacrificed in the old Jewish ceremonial is represented as having made clean or holy the bodies and garments of the diseased or sinful[1] peo-

[1] Lev. 14 : 7, 14, 25.

ple who prayed,[1] or of the priests who served in the temple. But in that case even, when did the blood do this? When it was flowing upon the ground from the slain victim? No: when it was applied; when it had been sprinkled on the bodies or garments of the people or the priests. So the blood of Jesus, to which this blood of the sacrificial victim is compared in the New Testament, must be applied. It must be sprinkled on that which it would make clean. The Apostle Paul speaks of being sprinkled from an evil conscience. How is this blood applied when sprinkled thus? To one's clothing, to one's body? Certainly not. It is applied figuratively. What is blood the figure of? We are told this over and over again in the Old Testament—nowhere more clearly, perhaps, than in Lev. 17:14: "It is the life of all flesh, the blood of it is for (i.e., it represents) the life thereof." Now if we substitute *life* for *blood* in the passage that we are considering, we find that, translated from the figurative into the literal, it reads thus: The life of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin. What have we in this passage? A statement of literal fact—not so? The life of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. What was this life? We all know—a life of love. A man who, in view of what he has learned of the earthly work of Jesus, has the love of Jesus in his heart, has that which necessarily drives out sin. What a beautiful figure is used by the Apostle when he speaks of this blood, this life, this love, as being sprinkled! Let a single drop fall

[1] Ex. 29 : 19-21.

upon the heart, a single impulse of love, and it will cause the germs of goodness and duty to start and push upward and outward till no sin at all is left within us. We become entirely cleansed. This is salvation. This is the end toward which the sacrifice upon the cross was directed. This is the culmination of the gratitude awakened in men's hearts because of that sacrifice. Notice what this culmination is,—a condition of the soul in which love is driving out sin. And notice again that the existence of this condition in any individual soul is far more important than any method through which it can be produced. This is the reason why our Lord could praise the Good Samaritan. Tho, possibly, this man himself did not know it, his conduct showed that working within him, however it got there, was the Spirit of the Christ and of God. This is the reason why you and I, too, if we feel that our professions are hollow, and our deeds destitute of love, need to come back to God, to open our hearts to him, so far as we can, and to ask him to sprinkle them afresh with the baptism of his Holy Spirit. "And we have not an high priest [1] which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities but was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

[1] Heb. 4 : 15, 16.

V

UNSELFISH LOVE THE CULMINATION OF NATURE'S TREND IN EVOLUTION

The words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.''—Acts 20 : 35.

Does this statement stand alone? Is it a declaration of a truth that, elsewhere than in the words of the Lord Jesus, has never been suggested. Or, like so many of the utterances of religious leaders, was it true before he said it; would it have been true if he had not said it? Is it one of those principles of universal applicability that is illustrated in the lives of men and in the laws of nature, and that is taught even by the gospel of evolution, with such plainness too that only our human dulness of discernment made it necessary for the Master to give utterance to it? Let us try to answer such questions.

Of two acts one is said to be more blessed than the other. How can we test the truth of a statement like this? By what criterion can we estimate giving and receiving in order to compare them? How do we judge the quality of any action? One way certainly is through considering the demand for it. Frugality demanded by the stern necessities of poverty is economy. Exercised amid coffers of un-

touched wealth, it is penuriousness. The demand for it, I say, is one criterion by which to test the quality of actions. It is more blessed to give than to receive. In mineral, in vegetable, in human life, is there more demand for giving than for receiving? What is Nature's answer to this question, so far as it furnishes an answer? Do the objects now existing in the world indicate that the process of giving is, or has been, in more active exercise than that of receiving? It is a question easy enough to solve. If the process of giving be, or have been, in more active exercise, then, by tracing the progress of life backward, we shall find a time when the possessions of life were less in quantity or quality than they are at present, the greater abundance in our time being due to the fact that each generation in succession has given to that which followed it more than it has received from that which preceded it. Do we find this condition realized? The slightest thought reveals to us that we do. Behind the innumerable multitudes of men and races on the earth at present, it is easy to trace back to a time when their forefathers could all be gathered into a few tribes and families. Behind even the animals and plants with seed springing up to augment in infinite variety the new products of each generation, science traces back, so far as enabled to trace at all, to some few specimens the prototypes of all. And this is true as applied not only to quantity but also to quality. There was a time when never sound of insect nor the music of a bird broke the monotony of universal silence on the earth.

There was a time when human faces were not seen to flush nor even flower or fruit to redden in the sunshine. The fervent early life of the globe grew cold and old and gray in service, then it gave the earth its granite. The stone foundations crumbled, and, at last, the earth had soil. The soil was brushed by winds, and watered by the rains, and when its days of spring had passed, there came the bud and bloom of summer. The heavens brooded over it again, and brought to life what plunged beneath the sea, and bounded over hills and swept up into air,—the fish, the beast, the bird. Then the Creative power came nearer and animated with inspiring breath one form of clay, and it became a living soul, a man. And now the man, with all creation back of him developing—for his sake, too—according to a law demanding more of giving than of receiving, both in quantity and quality,—what shall this man, first of all created beings with a will to choose or to reject this law pervading all the universe—what shall this man do? What should he do? Were human life afloat upon the swelling waters of a flood accumulated from a hundred storms amid steep mountain passes, could it yield to the tendency impelling its advance with greater reason, or resist it with more folly, than the soul that finds itself afloat upon this stream of tendency that floods all nature and that has its source so far up in the region of the infinite that man's weak powers can gather no conception of the distance? At such a stage, with such surroundings, with no data from which to infer the opposite, why should he not

acknowledge both in thought and deed, in view of the demands of nature and of human life, that the statement of the text is true, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

But the relative rank of deeds may be determined not only by the demands that call them forth, but also by the characteristics involved in the exercise of them. How is it with giving and receiving? What characteristics of life are fitted best to give, and what to receive? As we rise in the scale of being, are those powers multiplied the most which render giving possible, or those capacities which render receiving possible? We all know the answer to this. As we ascend from the mineral to the vegetable kingdom, and from this again to the animal, we pass from a sphere of life in which comparatively little is given by the individual beyond what is received to a sphere in which these conditions are reversed. The animal is born in caverns of the rocks, or in holes beneath the ground; but he is not dependent, as is vegetation, on the few faint gleams of sunshine which can steal into the cave, or on the paltry drippings of the shower which can work their way into the ground and reach him where he is. He is formed so that he does not need to receive these things. He has within him a source of action, enabling him to get them for himself. He can range at will from ledges of the mountains down to streams amid the valleys; and, in marked distinction from the plant, his food and comfort, for himself and young, depend far less on that

which he receives than on the energy which he gives forth.

And when from other animals we rise to man, what is that characteristic which especially belongs to him? What is it but a higher development of this same possibility of initiating action,—a power that can originate ends as well as means for enhancing enjoyment and enlightenment. How much less does nature furnish to satisfy the physical necessities of man than of the animal? How much more of love and care must human parents give their offspring than is demanded from the brute? How much more of toil and patience must the offspring themselves put forth to acquire the skill that must be theirs, would they obtain the necessities of life, to say nothing of its comforts and emoluments? The child receives what the parents have to give; but how about the man? How about him as an intellectual being? Would he be wise? Wisdom is not that knowledge of the earth which the eye receives, which can be pictured upon its pupil. It is the methods of the world fused into thought, often with untold sufferings,—the image of the actual as photographed,—amid the glowing fervor of experience, burnt in upon the living tissues of the soul, and then kept there after the transient din and smoke of words and deeds have vanished. Would one have influence? Honor is not the badge or crown or robe dropped, like Elijah's [1] cloak, from one who leaves the earth, upon some comrade left be-

[1] 2 Kings 2 : 13.

hind. It is the hard-earned right to rule another,—a right acknowledged by a world perceiving how this man—like every true man, howsoever born, a self-made man—has learned to rule himself. Would one have immortality? Had he no soul, or were it material, as slightly so as the drop of dew that hangs upon the buttercup, he might receive the blessing. The morning sun without his aid might shine upon him and transport him to the sky. But, being what he is, his spirit like the bird's must spread its wings and toil and tarry often before it reach its destination. Nay, more than this. If it would mount above, it must give up its very body and all its hold upon the objects in the world surrounding it. When, in the possibilities of faith, the vision of the rising soul concludes the drama of this worldly life, has not the man, as he was known to us, surrendered everything? Is it a wonder then that in this world, as well, the law of spiritual life is this: "Let each esteem others[1] better than themselves"? "Bear[2] ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ"? The law of Christ, what is it but to give, give words, give deeds, give suffering, give life itself? The law of Christ,—what is it but the law of God? When we rise highest in the sphere of existence, where has receiving flown? God is the giver, the giver of life. The universe may reflect his glory. But it does so from a mirror which he has first produced. It is more blessed to give than to receive, because it is most blessed to be God-like.

[1] Phil. 2 : 3.

[2] Gal. 6 : 2.

This brings us to another thought, undoubtedly the chief thought underlying the statement of the text. All that has been said so far has given us nothing but presumptive evidence of its truth. Now we have come to facts that are capable of doing more than this. The relative rank of deeds may be determined not only by the demands that call them forth, and by the characteristics involved in the exercise of them, but, besides this, by the rewards attending them. The rewards of receiving are material. Those of giving, when the giving is pure giving, void of every element of barter or of desire to obtain an equivalent, are necessarily spiritual. They are of a kind that man alone of all on earth is fitted to obtain, and that every man, too, is able to obtain. And yet how many fail to do so! There are those who have struggled hard and honestly to gain some prize that gleamed so brightly when they saw it far off from them that they imagined that, if they could only reach it, to possess it would be to hold in one's hand the light that should make bright all things surrounding them. But now, when they have gained it, the brightness has not come. There are those who have labored earnestly for knowledge, and wonder that their learning, though it has filled their minds with thought, has furnished, after all, so little that can satisfy their souls. There are those who have toiled through nights and days for wealth, and marvel that the treasures with the gleam of which their eyes were dazzled once, seem tarnished now when held within the hands so tightly clutching

them. There are those who have climbed and climbed to scale the heights of influence, and stand amazed now on some summit to find that though they may be further from the hearts of all their fellows on the earth, they are no nearer heaven. And, side by side with some of these, are others who have never gained a single outward object which, deep within their natures, they desired, and yet whose spirits overflow with gratitude. Do you recall that statement of the Master just before his life had proved, apparently, a failure, and the shadow of the crucifixion rested over him?—"These things have I spoken unto you," he said, "that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full."[1] Many of us feel that if we had only received more, more of ability, advantage, wealth, position, more of something to secure us greater influence,—very much more satisfactory, indeed, might have been the rewards of life. Our subject, this morning, teaches us that the rewards of life that are the most desirable,—in fact, that the main triumphs of life for ourselves or for others do not depend so much upon what we have received as upon what we give. We sometimes think that we have received so little that we have but little that it is possible for us to give. How do we know this as a fact? The only power that can really rule the intellectual and moral world is spirit, and spirit is the one thing that men never need to acquire. We all have it. We need only to exert it,—to exercise

[1] Jno. 15 : 11.

it. Have we forgotten him whom all forsook,[1] who had not where to lay his head? [2] He became the servant [3] of all. He is now the Lord of all. Might it not be wise to try his experiment, and see if we be not rewarded with something akin to his success? There are times in the lives of all men when friends, station, riches, power seem fading from their grasp like the fairy crowns and scepters of their childhood's dreams. But what of that? It is the law of the spirit's life. It is the law of Christ. He that loses [4] his life saves it; he that saves his life, he that gains the whole world, and holds it, holds that which is too heavy for him to carry. He buries his own soul beneath it. It may never know a resurrection.

If he that loses his life saves it, much more he that voluntarily gives his life. He gives that which is material, he saves that which is spiritual. This, friends, is the only salvation worth having. It is the only salvation that Jesus ever intended to offer; and his condition was "Follow [5] me." There may be reasonable doubt whether the powers above care as profoundly as some of us may imagine, about our worthless conceptions concerning modes of divine existence which, as a fact, for human minds are simply inconceivable; or concerning the processes of divine thought through which logic, such as exists beyond the limits of either time or space, works out the problem of the world's redemption. But this

[1] Mat. 26 : 56. [2] Mat. 8 : 20. [3] Phil. 2 : 7-11. [4] Mat. 10 : 39. [5] Mat. 4 : 19.

one thing is certain—as certain as the laws of gravitation—that there is no salvation for the spirit—no inward satisfaction, comfort, blessedness—except in the degree in which a man is led by the spirit of God, following, in this regard, in the footsteps of Jesus, the Great Master, to give himself, as the Master did—yet in ways conformable to his own human, limited, individual aptitudes and traits—to the service of others,—not of the Christ and God as distant, vague abstractions, but to the service of these as represented and present in one's fellow-men.[1] "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren," said Jesus, "ye have done it unto me." Friends, believe me, if you were on the topmost pinnacle of the new Jerusalem, with the city's choicest crystal, used as a lens, for your telescope, you could never spy out in the pursuit of any legitimate profession to which you could devote your energies, any obstacle to prevent you from fulfilling in your own career an aim like this. Will you believe it? Will you believe in Christ's life and God's law, and in the representative possibility in you and in me, as well as in the Christ, and try to live true to it?

We never can have physical life unless the blood be flowing through the channels made for it. How can we have spiritual life, except as love is flowing through the channels made for it,—from God through Christ, and then through Christ-like men, to all humanity? We have seen the waters rushing through the channels of the rivers to the sea. Does

[1] Mat. 25 : 40.

not, the agency of God, expressed in the laws of nature, keep the waters flowing? Is it often that their sources are exhausted?—Off they pour through the valleys to fill them with fertility and fragrance, and then to the ocean. But they are not lost. Up through the clouds, made bright by rainbow and by sunset, the tribute of the stream is lifted, beautified, apotheosized; and, when the dawn has come, borne backward by the unseen winds, the mist rests glorified upon the mountain range, and does not take its flight until new life and strength have been imparted to the spring from which the waters first flowed forth. Would it not be well for all of us to try a similar experience? to be like the spring; to open the energies of our being to the influences that come from above; to be born thus from above; to cultivate, early in life, habits of giving—of imparting to others—all that is peculiarly our own,—strength, experience, information, intelligence, position as well as wealth—for all are forms of wealth —and then to weep with those that weep and to laugh with those that laugh? Certainly the world that so we served would grow more genial to our vision. The firm grasp of friendship and assistance, when the pulse of gratitude was fluttering in the hand we held, would start a livelier impulse throbbing through our hearts. The bright smile of sympathy and encouragement, when others' faces were flushing to give response, would send a warmer current glowing through our veins. The kind word that bespoke consolation, and, if there were

a need, forgiveness, would make the comrades' eyes that glistened from beneath the tears that cleared them reveal, far down and deep, the sources of that joy which can be found alone where spirit is discovered to the spirit.

And more than this, too, one can say. It is not only on the surface of the earth that flowing rivers have an influence. It is not only on the earth that generous actions waken a response. Like mists that rise above the sea, up through the sky the effects of every slightest contribution to the welfare of the world are borne, robing all one's visions of the heavens in the hues of a reflected glory; and, like the mists, they, too, come back, and, clothed in pure celestial garb, they rest upon the brink of recollection in one's reveries, and brood above one's hope in dreams; and when he wakens in the morn of action, if they have disappeared, they have left him merely that like the mists again, they may permeate anew the springs of the spirit's energy, imparting to it a purity of purpose and a strength of will that of themselves may be an earnest and a foretaste of all the possibilities of spiritual attainment. In this life, and also in the next, "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

VI

LOVE, THE CRITERION OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."—John 13 : 35.

A personal possession of Christian life is a matter of so much importance that it was natural that the followers of Jesus should desire a test by which to become assured themselves, and to render others assured, of their discipleship. But such a test is by no means an easy thing to find. True religion in the soul is a result so comprehensive that it is difficult to grasp from it any single conception which shall serve as a criterion by which to estimate the whole.

On the one hand, outside of self, true religion implies a proper attitude of the man toward God. But what is God? What vague, unformulated ideas does the mind ordinarily frame of him? He is the God of nature; but when we try to trace his attributes in matter, we are lost in a maze of multitudinous forms, and a complexity of operations. He is the God of progress, but when we attempt to spell out the tale of history, we are puzzled by the diverse phases of the characters and the intricate develop-

ments of the plot. He is the God of revelation, but when we presume to systemize the infinite truth condensed in the pages of his word, we gaze into a prism where the scattered light in nature and in history has been concentrated in hues of greater power and beauty, but, so far are we from gathering from it a comprehensive category of his attributes, that we are fully as much dazzled as illumined by the brightness. We have endeavored to define him, it is true, and yet our definition, admirable as it may be as an aid to imagination, gives us an apprehension of him no more definite than the few stars which shine to our short-sighted vision in the midnight give us of the boundless realms of light beyond them. "God is a Spirit,[1] infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being." Tell me, what do such words mean? "Wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth"—who shall fathom the depth, the full significance, of terms like these?

On the other hand, if we turn from God to man, here, too, we find ourselves in perplexity. Religion implies the proper attitude of the man toward God. But what is man? How many phases and exercises of thought and feeling does the conception of him imply? With all the shifting element of his nature, surging like the waves of an ocean now one way and now another, physical tendencies balanced against mental, mental against spiritual, determination against indecision, passion against principle, doubt against faith, how shall we become enabled to

[1] Definition of God in the Presbyterian Westminster Catechism.

give due consideration to each and to comprehend all in a single analysis? It is true that, no matter how ruffled may be the surface of a stream, if the waters be clear, there are times when one can see the bottom, if he gaze down upon it, from a sufficient elevation. After the same manner, perhaps one might become able to penetrate to the depths of human nature. But how shall he rise high enough to do so—high enough intellectually, spiritually, near enough to the viewpoint of God—to be able to look beneath fickle appearances, and to detect what is permanent beneath them? Not only on account of what God is, therefore, but also on account of what man is, religion, which implies a proper attitude of the man toward God, is seen to be a result so comprehensive that it is extremely difficult to grasp from it any single conception which shall serve as a criterion by which to estimate the whole.

Of course, many have tried to originate criterions, both of God and of man, and of religion also. But their very differences respecting what the criterion should be, their failures to present a criterion universally accepted, show why men should desire a revelation from the Infinite One Himself concerning it. Some have said of God that he is so great as to be utterly unknowable, that we can understand none of his attributes. On the contrary, others have implied, at least, that his character has been fully manifested,—that we can understand almost all that is really essential concerning it. Of man, again,

some have claimed that he is utterly material from body through to soul; others that he is utterly immaterial, and that even his body and all the solid appearances about him are delusions, the results of imagination, like phantoms seen in a dream.

A true conception of God and of man, and, therefore, of the proper relations between them, lies, as you see, in a region beyond the possibilities of at least complete human comprehension. God is infinite, and man is finite; and yet, for this very reason, because man is finite, and because conceptions, infinite in their reach, are incomprehensible to him otherwise, he feels obliged, as it were, whenever they are suggested to him, to put them into some definite and finite shape.

As regards God, a man feels obliged to embody his ideas of such a Being in some form that can be comprehended. In other words, because the man can not embrace in the sphere of comprehension the complete, infinite, intangible essence of the deity itself, his nature obliges him, as it were, to substitute a proper attitude of mind toward some form representing the deity, for a proper attitude of mind toward the deity. Now what shall this form be? While the Christ was on the earth, all Christians hold that, in some degree or manner, this form was the Christ, and in holding this, they recognize the appropriateness—the conformity with the requirements of human nature—of what is termed the incarnation. All Christians hold, I say, that the attributes of God, in some way and to some degree, were

imaged and revealed, and became sources of reverence, confidence and obedience, in the Christ. But the Christ is not upon the earth today. What form shall represent to us that which he represented to the men of Galilee? He left his church upon the earth; and certain church-men, everywhere, in every sect, insist upon the idea in conception, if not upon the positive statement of it in their words, that the church—by which they mean an external, visible organization—not an internal, invisible, sympathetic union of the followers of the Christ, but the external church—in some way represents his presence; and that reverence, confidence and obedience exercised toward the church, or, sometimes, toward the officials of the church, are identical with reverence, confidence and obedience exercised toward God. It matters not whether the idea be accompanied by all the elaborate ceremonials of the Romanists or by only the simpler rites of the Protestants, the import of it is the same.

If we will turn to the chapter in which our text occurs, we shall find it uttered immediately after the institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; the Sacrament, as you will recall, which is acknowledged by every church to be the most distinctive test, so far as a church test is concerned, of discipleship. In these circumstances, provided that reverence, confidence or obedience exercised toward any ordinance of the church were to become a test of true discipleship, would not the Christ have said so, then and there? Of course He would. And what

did he say? After ending the institution of the supper, as tho with deliberate intent to disapprove of any assumption on the part of any church simply as an external organization to represent himself, he said, just at the time when he had the best possible opportunity to point to these elements, that, not by partaking of them, but "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love, one to another." Aside from reference to other ordinances of the church instituted by only the authority of ordinary men, we are obliged to infer, therefore, that not even a compliance with those undoubtedly instituted by the founder of Christianity, is to be taken as a test of true discipleship. His test—for one to apply to himself, and for others to apply to him—the Master's test, as he stated it, is simply this: "If ye have love, one to another."

It is desirable, wherever we can, to go back of a statement such as this, in order to ascertain, if possible, the reason underlying it. Thus we come to have a clearer apprehension of the wisdom manifested in the utterance of it. The Master implies that reverence, confidence and obedience exercised toward the church is not a test of discipleship in the same sense as is respect, love and service rendered to a Christian brother. Why is this so? Why can not the church represent the Christ? And why can a Christian brother do it? Why can not the church represent God, and why can a man do it? What is the difference between the church and manhood that it should cause a difference in the service rendered

to them? The difference between the two is evidently this: one is an organization that has no personality, in the sense of possessing thought, feeling, and will; the other has all these; and just in this difference do we detect the reason of our Lord's remark. The church as an organization may represent law, the law of God. Its preachers may proclaim this law; its officers may enforce it; its forms may embody, and, if you please, symbolize it. But the church can do no more; and valuable as it may prove as an auxiliary to enable men to learn, and to preserve in remembrance from age to age, the duty that God requires of man, it is not all that men need, when they demand something that shall do the work of representing God himself. For the essence of the Christian religion consists in this: that God is considered to be not a mere blind, unthinking, unsympathetic source of power in the universe, but one who possesses the attributes of intelligence, fatherhood, sovereignty,[1] toward whom the individual, therefore, feels a sense of spiritual kinship, affection and responsibility like that of a relative, a child, a subject.

Granted such a conception of God, and the Church becomes a powerful instrumental agency in teaching a man what he should do to obey Him. But the Church cannot represent or stand in the place of God, simply because it is not a thinking, feeling, willing representative. And if you wish to furnish a man with a test as to whether he loves God or not,

[1] Mat. 6 : 9-13.

you must furnish him, not with a mere set of laws, but with a living being toward whom he can exercise love. So true is this statement as proved from history that in all churches in which innovators have begun to exalt the ceremonial, the ritual, as standing in the place of the Christ or of God, they have ended, recognizing the insufficiency of this medium, by exalting the officials of the Church, the Priest, Bishop, Patriarch or Pope, and making them the representatives of that ideal of a thinking, feeling, willing sovereign for which in its worship, every human mind inevitably craves. Organization, machinery, ceremonialism, can represent what is material only, not the spiritual God. If He be not represented in the fellow-man of a democratic form of church government, he will be represented in the exclusive, arbitrary, exalted official of an aristocratic form. Which of the two is the true Biblical form we can infer from such passages as this one, in which, as you remember, that the Christ, while describing the Judgment, affirms that God shall say: "Depart [1] from me, ye cursed, for I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger and ye took me not in; naked and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison and ye visited me not. Then shall they answer him saying: Lord, when saw we thee an hungered or athirst or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not minister unto thee. Then shall he answer them saying, Verily, I say unto you, inas-

[1] Mat. 25 : 41-44.

much as ye did it not to one of the least of those, ye did it not to me." And the same language is used in a positive form in another place. "Inasmuch[1] as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

The claim that such passages refer to an official class except as, in an organization, this official class may represent the authority of all, is on a par with the claim that confession to only one of this class is enjoined by the words, "Confess[2] your faults one to another,"—the very thing that, where an official interferes, is never done. The man who feels that he can be fully forgiven by one such official, in an official and so a formal way, is the very last man to go to his unofficial neighbor whom he has wronged, and tell him the truth about his conduct, and strive to obtain his forgiveness. But, perhaps, some of you may ask, "How do you interpret such a passage as 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind[3] on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven'; or, what is to the same effect, 'Whose soever[4] sins ye remit, they are remitted'?—The first was uttered to the Apostle Peter."—Yes, but the second was uttered, at another time, to all the Apostles together; and, at still another, the same in effect was uttered to all of a miscellaneous crowd[5] of listeners. It seems to me, too, that all three statements thus uttered, like almost everything else that reason should accept, can be

[1] Mat. 25 : 40. [2] James 5 : 16; compare also Mat. 18 : 15.
[3] Mat. 16 : 19. [4] Jno. 20 : 23. [5] Mat. 18 : 15-20.

proved to be true, and to be true today, by facts. It would be strange if there were not some of you before me now, who, at some time in your lives, have been conscious of weakly yielding to temptation, conscious of having done wrong, and, in some way, of being wrong in your own natures; and it would be strange if then you had not gone to some good man or woman that you knew—perhaps a church official, perhaps not—and, upon confession, been assured that he or she forgave you; and that God, too, would forgive you and strengthen you to resist temptation in the future; and it would be strange if then, as a result, you had not felt that your own sin was, as a fact, remitted; that your soul was no longer weighed down by the burden of it; that you could go away with a light heart, and with a new and heavenly purpose. I tell you, friends, that wherever the work of the Christ is, we find him exalting the influence of common humanity, not of uncommon inhumanity that so often claims a crown or a miter for itself, and for itself alone.

I say that we find our Lord exalting common humanity; and yet, it is a fact that in this term—common humanity, used in connection with our present thought—we can include every member of our human race so far alone as we conceive him to embody, as the Lord did, the spirit of divinity. It is only the good, the spiritual man, whose assurance of forgiveness men accept. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God[1] they," and they only, are recognized

[1] Rom. 8 : 14.

to be "the sons of God." The words of the Master are: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one toward another." According to him, they are known to be disciples, not because they are partizans of sects, wrangling most, perhaps, with those of their own denomination—not because of this, whether they belong to the party that seems to wish to resolve all Christian thought into an act of memory, or to the party that seems to wish to transform all Christian life into a dress parade. If anything, such people prove that they are not disciples. Nor are they known to be these, because they are declaimers in public of some creed, saying, "I believe in" this or that—which often means about as much—has as much to do with what is in their souls—as a chip bounding up and down upon the waves has to do with what is in the bottom of the sea. No; they are known to be disciples, not because of these things, but because they have love one to another. One to another—who are these latter? All humanity? Yes, in a certain sense, but, in another and peculiar sense, it must mean those who have proved themselves to be spiritually the followers, the disciples of the Christ.

And who are these? The answer to this question brings us to the second part of our subject. The necessity of a revealed test of discipleship as shown from the comprehensiveness, not only of the attributes of God, but also of the elements entering into what is termed man, whose proper attitude toward God is implied in the conception of religion.

What, then, is man? Or, rather, by what can we, by what do we estimate that part of him that has to do with religion? A man is not a mere manifestation of some one habit, opinion or emotion, but of many of these combined; and we estimate him by the resultant of all these exercises, by what we term his character. We do this when judging of his ordinary life; why should we not do so when judging of his religious life? And what, now, is the test of character? If we think about the subject a moment we shall find that we can form hardly any estimate of it at all, in the case of an individual, except as we view him when he is brought into contact with one or more other individuals. A man's character, we say, is evinced in the shake of his hand, his bow, his walk, his words, his opinions, his likes, his dislikes, his indications of indignation, of pleasure, of passion, of indifference; but how and when is a man's character evinced by these things? Always, when we consider him in his relations to other men. If his manner indicate an intention to be kind to them; his expression in word and deed a desire to enlighten and benefit them; if his likes be awakened by goodness in them, his dislikes by badness in them, his indignation by meanness in them, his ingratitude by generosity in them, then we esteem him for his character. Accordingly, we see a double reason why the test of the discipleship of the Christ should consist in love one to another; not merely because, now that the Christ is no longer visible, each Christian brother is the best embodiment of what is personal in

God, but also because such a manifestation toward a person is the surest test of character in any circumstances.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love, one to another." Our subject suggests its own lessons of warning in view of false professions, and of the necessity for watchfulness in view of future temptations. I need not dwell upon them. Let me ask you only, as regards one's own Christian experience, is there not a great deal of consolation to be drawn from this test as thus expressed by our Lord? When, for instance, we are passing through one of those transient periods of doubt, that, like cloudy days, obscure, at times, the horizon of every experience, is it not a blessed privilege to be able to turn aside from investigations and introspections, from arguments concerning churches, forms, creeds and dogmas, from meditation upon repentance, regeneration, forgiveness and assurance of faith, to these plain, simple words, "If ye have love one to another," or to the same thought as exprest by the Apostle John, "We know that we have passed from death[1] unto life because we love the brethren." Is it not an easy thing to ask one's self, do I love every man who seems to embody in his character the loving spirit of the Master? Do I love him, not because he is like myself, not because he sympathizes with myself, not because he has bestowed benefits upon me, not because he values my character or even esteems my friendship,—do I love

[1] 1 Jno. 3: 14.

him, even tho, owing to misapprehensions of my character, he may dislike me? Do I love him, irrespective of any selfish considerations, and do all that I can, in business and social life, to evince my love for him, simply because I recognize in him the manifestation of the "fruit[1] of the spirit,—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." If so, then I have the assurance of the Christ that this feeling on my part is one test of the fact that I sympathize with him and am his disciple.

The longer one meditates upon the text before us, the more firm will become his conviction of the truth of the great principle that underlies the criterion to which it gives expression,—that humanity must learn to measure its love for the Christ by its love for man. Whether he be conscious of it or not, I think it will be found that everyone, in forming a conception of the Christ, imagines to himself an ideal man, perfect in every lineament, an ideal, modified according to one's knowledge of revealed or of scientific truth; but, at best, an ideal. This ideal within his own soul furnishes him with all that he can know of the Christ that is dwelling within him, and it is to this ideal Christ ruling him within, restraining him through conscience, stimulating him through aspiration, to which if he be a Christian, he really gives his first allegiance. If this be so, it is evident also that, in the degree in which the ideal is verified or modified by the manifestations of Christ-like traits

[1] Gal. 5 : 22.

in others—in the degree in which the spirit of the Christ embodied in them awakens one's own love and stimulates one's own zeal—in that degree does he show the exact influence exerted over his mind and heart by the Christ himself.

Now, friends, would we know whether or not we are Christians? How shall we become aware of our love for the Christ and for God? First, let us ask ourselves, what think we of Christ? Are we sure that our ideal is an accurate one? Would the historic Christ be our friend if he were dwelling with us today, and were he to lead, relatively, the same kind of a life as that which he led eighteen hundred years ago in Palestine? And then, let us ask ourselves, do we admire those who live among us today in the degree in which they manifest traits similar to those that he manifested? If so, why can not we accept this fact as a verification of the existence within us of that love one to another mentioned in our text? What more acceptable homage can we make to God than to transfer to him the feeling that we have for our earthly friends—to worship him as we do the object of attachment in the early zeal of our devotedness? Imagine human love transfigured—is not that heaven? Imagine the object of human love transfigured—is not that God?

And if there be consolation to be drawn from the possession of this clear test given in the text, is there not also stimulus to be drawn from it? What my Christian friend is to me, I am to him. If, so far as he be spiritual, his good qualities represent

the Christ dwelling in him for me to love, so far as I may be the same, my good qualities may represent the Christ to him. As the Apostle Paul says, "For me to live" is not for a mere man to live, but for Christ to live. "For me to live[1] is Christ." This is the religion of humanity in the best sense as preached by the greatest of the apostles to humanity. Let parents see to it, then, that they be to each of their family what the Eternal Father of all living creatures is to them. Let the children of the household see to it that they be to each member of the household what the Christ, the elder brother, is to them. Let those of society, of the state, of the world, see to it that they be, in all of these relations, like the one who went about doing good, who was the prince of peace, who bore—bore with, as well as carried—the sins of the whole world.

Ah, friends, when mankind shall come to embody these conceptions, we shall hear little more about churches without Christ as their head, or about theological systems that put intellectual speculation in the place of spiritual life. Not human organizations, not brains, need chiefly to be righted. Our hearts are empty. They need the Sovereign. Nay, I may say more. It is not so much a new heaven and a new earth that we need before we shall be satisfied, awaking in the image of the Christ. It is the Christ, himself, that we need to descend into all our hearts here, beneath this old heaven and in this old

[1] Phil. 1 : 21.

earth. When Moses[1] came down from Sinai, when Jesus[2] stood upon the Mount of Transfiguration, they did not need to drop their physical surroundings in order to have their visages shine like those of angels. Neither do we. Accept the Christ; love the Christ; live the Christ for your own sakes and for the sake of those about you. So far as you and the other members of the community in which you dwell do this, your own household will become akin to heaven itself, and you yourself be seated as certainly upon a throne of love, reigning as securely to the eyes of God, if not to those of men, as if you already had been transported past the beacons of the celestial city, and were already encircled by its flaming battlements.

[1] Ex. 34 : 29. [2] Mark 9 : 2, 3.

VII

THE FORMATIVE EFFECTS OF THE CHURCH'S FORMS

"He said unto them: Go, show yourselves unto the priests: and it came to pass that, as they went, they were cleansed."—Luke 17: 14.

The narrative of which our text forms a part is briefly related in the words of Scripture as follows: "And it came to pass as he,"—i. e., Jesus, "went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And, as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off; and they lifted up their voices and said, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.' And when he saw them, he said unto them, 'Go, show yourselves unto the priests.' And it came to pass that as they went they were cleansed."

The peculiar characteristics of a man are manifested more or less in everything that he does. With greater or less distinctness, the same general methods of thought can be traced in the development of all his plans. In literature, we say of a passage that it is like Shakespeare or like Goethe. In military affairs, we say that a maneuver was a characteristic one for a Napoleon, or for a Frederick the Great. If this be the case with men, it is legitimate to infer that it is so with the Divine Being; that he must

have one wisest way of doing all things. Indeed, it ought to be more so with the divine than with human beings, because, presumably, he never can err in his judgments, and he never needs to change his methods for the purpose of experiment. Accordingly, in the unfolding of life in the human mind, or in the general history of the world, we ought not to be surprised to find the same processes of development. Or, if we turn to inanimate nature, we ought not to be surprised to find, from the growth of a plant to that of the remotest star visible, the presence of the same general laws.

The writings of such men as Buckle, showing the influence of law in history, and of Darwin, showing the influence of law in nature, are supposed by some to be detrimental to religious faith. On the contrary, with exception of a few individual deductions of their own, which all intelligent men acknowledge to be as yet unsubstantiated, in every case in which these writers confine themselves to simple statements of facts as perceived in history or in nature, they present strong arguments in favor of religion, inasmuch as they present clearly the conception that one source of law, perfect in wisdom, and hence immutable in the general outlines of methods, controls all the arrangements and operations of the universe. Faith in the unity and universality of these methods is the source of all that is most beautiful and forcible in the analogies of poetry, philosophy, science or history, and this faith is no more vital to the development of them than to that of Christianity.

All who believe in the divinity of our Lord's mission must believe that the psychic method—a method recognized even by scientists of our own day to be in certain cases effective—that this method which he applied in order to remedy physical disorder, must be analogous, in its general features, to the method that should be applied to spiritual disorders. Moreover, leprosy, with which he was dealing in the cases instanced in connection with our text, was conventionally regarded by the Jews as especially symbolical of sin. That this method of regarding it was authorized, too, by their religion is evident from the manner in which it is treated in the Old Testament. Accordingly, there is both a general and a specific reason why we have a right this morning to consider this narrative as having a distinctively spiritual significance.

There are three thoughts that seem suggested by the manner in which the disease, in these cases, was cured. First: those afflicted by it were told to do something in itself of no avail: "Go, show yourselves unto the priests." These men had heard, undoubtedly, about the Great Prophet who was accustomed to touch men afflicted by the palsy, and who had anointed with clay the eyes of the blind. They undoubtedly expected that some such operation would be performed upon themselves. Instead of this, imagine their surprise when they were told simply to go and show themselves unto the priests. As men of common sense, the first impression that would be conveyed to them might be that they could

show themselves to a priest until doomsday without its doing them any good.

This idea of what must have been their impression is confirmed when we turn to the second thought that the narrative suggests, which is that they were told to do something which any one else could have told them to do, something according to the regular routine of the treatment of leprosy under the Jewish dispensation,—something which, very likely, they had done already. "Go to the priests." Every leper went to the priests. In the 13th chapter of Leviticus are given the laws by which the priests, who exercised the functions, apparently, of a board of health, were to be guided in dealing with symptoms of this disease. If there had been a mistake, and the tokens were not those of leprosy, the patient was to be discharged. If there were doubt, he was to be kept in confinement for one or two weeks, and then to be re-examined. If there were no doubt, he was to be declared a leper, and to be exiled from places where contagion with him might prove dangerous to others. Of this latter class, apparently, were these lepers which "stood afar off." They had been to the priests; why go again, unless they could show themselves healed? And when the command was given they had not been healed; why, before going, should they not wait until they were healed?

The third thought that the narrative suggests is that, although they were told to do something in itself of no avail, and something according to the

regular routine of the Jewish dispensation, nevertheless their being cleansed was directly conditioned upon their action, as directly as if the connection between going and being cleansed had been as close as that between cause and effect. "As they went they were cleansed." It is not said that their going caused the cleansing, but it is clearly implied that, if they had not gone, the power that caused the cleansing would not have been exerted.

Let us examine these three thoughts thus suggested, and find if we can derive from them any truths of practical importance. In order to do so, let us try to ascertain, in the first place, some of the reasons why it was natural that the Master should adopt this particular method. Why, in the first place, were the lepers told to do something in itself of no avail? Simply, as it seems to me, because there was nothing which they could do, no means by which they could heal themselves. And they were thus plainly told to do something in itself of no avail, in order that their attention might be directed to this fact. Had they been touched, they might have ascribed their cure to some power of human magnetism. Had they been ordered to wash in water, they might have imagined some healing efficacy to reside in the water. Instead of these things, they are told simply to go and show themselves to the priests. The command was given, as I conceive, to have a negative effect upon them, to direct their thoughts away from false sources of cure.

Why, in the second place, were they told to do

something according to the regular routine of the Jewish dispensation? Was not this course pursued, in turn, in order to produce a positive effect upon them—i. e., to concentrate their thoughts upon the true source of cure, because this was the source of the laws concerning the treatment of leprosy which they were about to fulfil? Did not the Master, in recognizing the propriety of obedience to these laws, intend to direct their thoughts away from himself, so far as concerned his merely physical possibilities, and to turn them toward his spiritual possibilities, which it was his desire to emphasize?

And why did it happen, in the third place, that after their thoughts had been withdrawn from false sources of cure and concentrated upon the true source, that, as a sequence of this, "as they went they were cleansed?" What connection could there be between withdrawal and concentration, and a result of this sort? The question appears, at first, to be unanswerable. Nevertheless, there are some analogies in nature and human life which may serve to throw light upon a problem even as difficult as this.

One such analogy is furnished by the experience of the mind in a purely intellectual effort. How does a man set out to compose an essay, or to solve a mathematical problem? First, he withdraws his thoughts from all subjects that are irrelevant to the subject in hand; then, he concentrates his thoughts as closely as he can, upon it; and then, after that, what follows? Why, then, something occurs to him, as he

says. The method of proof, if it be logical; the method of computation, if it be mathematical, seems to flash upon his mind. It seems to be added to his experience from another source than himself, as clearly so as if he could hear it whispered by some friend beside him. The mind, by thus separating itself from all irrelevant topics, and concentrating upon the one before it, appears, as it were, to force itself up into a region near to the truth that is sought, a region charged with trains of thought, like lines of electricity in the clouds, which come pouring in from all directions. If only one's thought can hold itself long enough in this region, by and by there comes a line like a flash of light through which the mind can look, and at a glance, perceive, illuminated, the truth for which it is in search. But all that a man can do toward effecting this result is to abstract and concentrate his thought. When once in the region desired, the range of his information, and his natural capacity for detecting relations, will determine the degree of his success. Indeed, one might almost say that the chief object of education, aside from imparting information, is the training of these powers of abstraction and of concentration, and that one's ability to hold himself long in one region of thought is the measure of his intellectual power. Some of the greatest mathematicians and philosophers— Kepler, for instance— have been accustomed to force their thoughts into the desired region before going to bed at night, affirming that, after the mind has attended to the

subject during all its dreams, the solution has come without effort in the morning. In fact, most men might sum up the history of all their intellectual apprehensions of truth by saying: "As I went on to think"—to abstract and concentrate my thought —"it occurred to me."

It is evidently natural that the same process should be according to law in the apprehension of spiritual truth. There are those about us who need conversion and regeneration. How can these be given them? Only, as we all admit, by putting them in circumstances where they shall apprehend spiritual truth, and be inspired to embody it in their methods of life. How can these things be done? How better than by pursuing the very course pursued, according to this narrative, by the Master: First, by directing their thoughts away from merely material or human as distinguished from spiritual or divine methods of cure; second, by directing their actions toward the fulfilment of duties, secular or religious, of which they already know; and, third, by leaving them, when thus directed in thought and conduct, in a position where it is as philosophical as it is religious to suppose that the time will soon come when it can be said of them that, as they went, they were cleansed. These seem to be the lessons taught by the narrative that we are now considering; and I wish to derive from it certain suggestions with reference to the methods adopted by the Church in dealing with the disease which we term sin.

It seems to me that the narrative can suggest to us, in the first place, the degree of efficacy that should be attributed to the methods, whether in the way of worship or work, that, through sacraments and ordinances, are prescribed by the Church for its members. Here, as in almost everything else, two extremes are to be avoided—one that regards the prescribed forms as of avail in themselves, and the other that regards them as of no avail whatever. Most people who think would probably agree in concluding that they are not of avail in themselves; that Christianity is of no use, unless it makes men better for ordinary life, and that, as contributing to the betterment of this, one could read his Bible in every leisure moment, continue all night at his prayers, bathe in a baptismal font every morning, and make every meal commemorative of the Last Supper; and yet that these mere forms of themselves without anything in addition, could do him no good. Experience and common sense both seem to teach this, and Christianity effects little, except as it embodies common sense directed into channels of religion. A man might come and show himself to the priests in a temple, or to the ministers in a church, every Sunday of his life, and these could do no more for him than the Levites who could examine, but could not heal, the disease of leprosy.

There seem to be good reasons, therefore, underlying the theories of those who hold that every attempt to clothe the means of grace, as they are termed, with a false sanctity, or to ascribe efficacious

results to an unthinking use of them is a perversion of their purpose. If one be told that there is a spiritual efficacy residing in the water of baptism, he may be persuaded more easily than otherwise that his child or himself should be baptized; but there is danger in this case that he may be led to look only at the water, and forget about the God who alone can regenerate the soul. If one be told again that in the communion he partakes of the real body of the Lord, he may more readily apprehend how he can assimilate the traits of that body into his own; but there is danger in this case that he may be led to think only of the wafer and forget about the God who alone can nourish the spirit.

This is one extreme to be avoided. The other is that of regarding what are termed the means of grace as of no avail whatever. As a fact, to the soul they are of as much avail as the majority of things with which we have to deal. Few are valuable in themselves; all, at times, may become valuable as tokens. Who of us desires his friends, for instance, to bestow upon him gifts chiefly remarkable for their price; or words chiefly noteworthy for the fulsomeness of their flattery. Rather than this, we should prefer one of the thousand flowers that grow upon every hedge, and the smallest kind word that ever taxed the movement of a breath. We value our friend's gifts and words, not because of what they are in themselves, but because of what they are as tokens. So with the forms prescribed

by the church. The emblems in the sacraments are as simple and as ordinary as anything of which we know. Water and bread are so simple and ordinary that one would not suppose that a child could ascribe any efficacy to them; and yet how sublimely they may affect one when he regards them as tokens of an interchange of love between the soul of man and of God! "Go show yourselves unto the priests;" "Not forgetting the assembling of ourselves together;" [1] "Repent and be baptized;" [2] "This do in remembrance of Me;" [3] very simple actions, these!—but when considering the circumstances in which they were ordered, how can a rational man say that they are not important? A small silk flag, attached to a frail pole, is not, in itself, a formidable weapon. But when used as an emblem,—when waved in battle at the head of a regiment,—he would show very little knowledge of human nature who should say that it could be of no avail!

It seems to me that the subject before us may suggest, in the second place, the relation sustained by the observance of the ordinances and sacraments of the Church to character in general. Going to the priests did not cleanse the lepers. They were healed because it came to pass that, "as they went they were cleansed" by spiritual power. Applying this principle to a church form, we can argue, first, that those who have clearly recognized it as a condition preceding cleansing ought to fulfil it; and, second, because the form is of no avail in itself, and

[1] Heb. 10 : 25. [2] Act 2 : 38. [3] Luke 22 : 19.

because all the power exerted is spiritual, we can argue that those who have not recognized the form as a condition can be cleansed without fulfilling it. As the Apostle Paul says, "Those who have no law[1] are a law unto themselves." This is a reason why a man can be, in the strictest sense, an adherent of a church, and yet, in the broadest sense, charitable toward those who are not adherents of it. He can urge upon all the propriety and the rationality of the ordinances of his church, and yet, recognizing the sovereignty and control of the Spirit of God, admit the possibility of salvation aside from the fulfilment of any of its ordinances. If one of the lepers had been deaf, a just physician might have cured him, even though he had not turned toward the priests. And so with any one, if, for any reason, the conditions are not clearly recognized. A man once said to me, "No true Christian can be a true philosopher, because he can't weigh candidly truth from all quarters; because he must be prejudiced against that truth either of the feelings or of the intellect, which is found outside the Church." This man was mistaken, because he was judging the Church according to the judgment of the world. The world's ideal Christian may be a bigot, but the Biblical ideal is not. The prophets of about every people of antiquity, except some of those of the Jews, held that their gods were the gods of their nations alone. Several Jewish prophets included the Gentiles among the recipients of blessings promised to

[1] Rom. 2 : 14.

Israel. We are told that Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah;[1] but we are nowhere told that the Ninevites were ever asked to become Jews. It was the Apostle Paul who went to Greece and said that he whom they ignorantly—not refused to worship, but worshipped[2]—him declared he unto them. It was the Master himself who, instead of rebuking the woman of Samaria for not fulfiling the forms of the Jews by worshipping the Father at Jerusalem, informed her that the time was coming, and had come, when she need not do so, telling her that God is a Spirit, and that men may worship him in spirit[3] and yet in truth.

Accordingly, one can draw an inference from revelation as well as from reason, to the effect that a Christian can admit that forms are of no avail in themselves, and yet strenuously maintain that they should be followed, because they are conditions enjoined by the Master. In this way, he can admit the genuineness of spiritual life and truth outside the Church, at the same time that he insists upon the observance of forms inside the Church. It is the man who in his relation to actual conditions can do both these that is the true philosopher. In so far as he rejects either of them and slights the principle of human nature upon which it is founded, and the influence which it has exerted, and always will exert upon every question of morals, science or civilization—in so far he, himself, is in danger of manifesting the narrowness and lack of philosophic breadth

[1] Mat. 12 : 41. [2] Acts 17 : 23. [3] John 4 : 20-24.

that he has supposed to be a necessary characteristic of the Christian.

But, again, our subject, as I see it, may suggest not only the nature of the importance to be ascribed to the ordinances of the Church, and their relation to character in general, but also, in the third place, their relation to individual character. According to what has been said, forms are of no avail in themselves. They are only of avail as conditions, and only of these because they are recognized as being authoritatively prescribed. Undoubtedly, thousands of lepers, before and after the time of the Master, went to the priests; but we have no warrant to suppose that any were cleansed, except those who went at this time, because he had told them to do it. If we ask, why did they go? there is but one answer—because they had faith in him. This brings us to a reason underlying the inefficacy, as applied to individual character, of a mere external formal observance of ordinances—a reason with which, in this church, we are all familiar. "Whatsoever is not of faith," says the Apostle Paul in Romans 14:23, "is" —not only inefficient but—"sin"; and again, Romans 1:17, "the just shall live by faith." On the continent of Europe, and in some churches not there, all children, when about fourteen years of age, are confirmed and admitted to the communion. In some parts of Germany no man can be married or permitted to have a license to do business, not even to keep a beer-shop, unless he can show his papers of confirmation or of what corresponds to it in his own

sect. This seems to involve a danger of perverting the first object of the communion. Why do those children partake of the elements? Because it is a fashion, a form; not because it is an expression of their own faith in him who established it. The very way in which they are accustomed to be led just at a certain age, to the Supper, has a tendency to cause them to lose sight of the reason for partaking of it; to make it furnish no evidence of their possessing Christian faith as a basis of character, as well as to furnish no incitement to make them cultivate this faith. In our own country, on the contrary, where there is no acknowledged age for the first communion, there is a tendency on the part of the young, instead of regarding the form as of avail in itself, to neglect it altogether. By consequence, there are many here who at heart are really Christians, but whose Christian influence is lost to the world. Indeed, their whole spiritual experience is, sometimes, even to themselves, shrouded in doubt, solely because they have failed to fulfil what they may be perfectly justified in terming a mere form.

The spirit of my subject this morning, as well as the letter of the text, prevents me from confining its teachings to what has to do merely with the ordinances of the Church. I have already suggested, though briefly, its reference to all external forms, whether ecclesiastical or moral. Viewed in relation to these, it seems to give expression to a principle applicable to every sphere of activity, religious or secular. "As they went they were cleansed." In

the world it is the running stream that does not stagnate in the fall or freeze in winter. In the community, it is the working man whose limbs are not made lax by slumbering in a stagnant marsh, or rigid as he tries to reach a place too high above the frost line. In the Church it is the working member who does not keep back the enterprise of his fellows by the complaints of his criticism, or lessen their enthusiasm by the sanctimoniousness of his formalism. In nature, God yields the rill a rock to foam about, a ledge to dash upon, that he may thus increase its speed and volume. In the community, He yields the man financial woes to break upon, financial foes to rise above, that he may thus increase his cautiousness and energy; and in the Church he yields the members wants and obstacles that he may thus increase their earnestness and thoroughness. In ordinary life, it is the business as well as the military man whose faith moves on just when the coward hesitates, that thus wrests victory from the jaws of defeat. In religious life, it is the man who has not put his hand to the plow[1] and then looked back because of obstacles, the man who has had faith to go forward in the path of duty, and thus come out of great tribulation,—it is he whose robes are finally spotless in their purity and whose lips can frame no sound that is not resonant with praise. Action and reaction—it is the law of life; to go is necessary before one can get. "Draw nigh[2] to God" the Scriptures say, "and he will draw nigh to

[1] Luke 9 : 62. [2] James 4 : 8.

you." The world about us is a mirror wherein he that looks perceives himself reflected; all his own movements returned to him in their own kind. In society, as a rule, the one who gives a smile receives a smile. The one who meets with frowns is met with frowns. In the Church, the one who comes forward to welcome another in the name of a disciple is the one who finds others coming forward to welcome him. The one who does all that he can in order that others may receive a blessing, is the one who himself receives a blessing. Everywhere the rays of heaven fringe about the heavenly soul; the fires of hell shoot out around the hellish. It is he that loses his life who finds it; it is he that finds his life who loses it.[1] In the Christian course he that walks is vivified with health, and he that lies down is stiffened into death. Will you not apply to your own condition this morning the lesson of the text?

Unless my subject be utterly destitute of any truth, there can be no spiritual life, or, if we have this, no spiritual health for any of us, in this world or in the world to come, unless we endeavor to live true to all the knowledge that we possess, and to avail ourselves of all the means of good or of grace at our command; unless, when we hear the injunction, "Go," we act in such a way that others can say of us that as they went they were cleansed.

[1] Mat. 10 : 39.

VIII

HOW TO TEACH RELIGIOUS THEORY AND PRACTISE

"For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little."—Isaiah 28 : 10.

Other parts of the whole passage from which this text is taken indicate that it is meant to refer to the methods of instructing the young in divine truth. "Whom shall he teach knowledge and whom shall he make to understand doctrine?" asks the prophet. "Them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts," is the answer. "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little." There is nothing original or striking in this statement. Any ordinary school teacher could have uttered and proved it from his own experience. Human thought in most of us is enveloped in a crust of thoughtlessness, and precept upon precept and line upon line are the successive lurches of the lever of instruction which is to pry the mind open and let in the light. Here is the writing class: how many times over must this letter be explained and that line delineated? There is the class in mathematics. A whole year must be spent in repeating

and reciting, the same to be renewed at the end of it. There is the class in languages—whether in the first book, second book, or third book, the same simple rules are recurring all the while; "precept must be upon precept, line upon line." Only thus can the principles of writing, arithmetic or syntax be made to sink into the mind and to abide there as permanently regulative methods of deed or thought. And if the teacher have not patience to reiterate and perseverance to make the pupil reapply the precept, while there may be apparent progress, what is the child's knowledge of these subjects really worth? To one who has never been drilled in the rudiments of a subject, it can seldom prove pleasurable to himself or profitable to others.

Or, suppose that we turn to more abtruse departments of knowledge, to natural science or philosophy; would it do for one without previous preparation to plunge into anything resembling learned or profound discussions of these? Unless little by little, precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little, his mind had become accustomed to the definitions and laws which constitute the first principles of these branches, he would at once find himself beyond his depths, and overwhelmed completely.

What we term schooling is not the only means through which influence can be exerted upon the growing mind. Character can be effected no less than intelligence; demeanor no less than thought. In training the child to integrity and morality, every

mother could confirm the statement of the text,—precept must be upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little. How many times must the little hands be snatched by a firm but gentle grasp from petty theft? the little lips cured of the fever of their petulance by the warm balm of a kiss? It is in the self-control that learns to refrain from the extra stick of candy, or the extra glass of milk, that the lesson of temperance begins. It is in the self-denial that can go to bed with sunset and rise with the dawn, that the foundation of efficiency and fortune are laid. If there be not here a little and there a little, when one is just starting upon the voyage of life, what a wreck does he experience as he sails onward! Take him whom we term a mother's pet, who never yet has been denied a wish;—whatever may have been his course at home, how often, when let loose from it, does he fall a victim to dissipation! Take the methods of education common to certain countries of Europe, where there is virtually no training in self-control—no developing and strengthening of that which restrains and regulates the nature from within one's own mind—countries in which there is only the sort of training that results from outside pressure—the boys barred up and watched in boarding schools, and the girls tied to the apron-strings of governesses and chaperons—when, in such a country, the boarding school flings wide its doors to the young man, and marriage sets free the young woman, what waves of immorality are apt to sink the soul because it has not become

accustomed little by little to stem those lesser billows of temptation that are nearer the head waters of the currents that are sweeping life onward! "Precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little,"—how important is the principle, would we influence intelligence or morals, thought or conduct!

The instructions and institutions of religion ought not to be out of analogy with methods of influence in other departments. For the spiritually young in God's household and kingdom, to develop spiritual intelligence and grace in family and church, ought not that which needs to be known to be presented according to similar methods—precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little? Let us answer this question as applied, first, to religious opinions. These are usually expressed in what are termed dogmas. Dogmas are compendiums of scriptural statements obtained through the study of these by learned men of the past, like Augustine and Athenasius, Luther and Calvin. Every sect has a greater or smaller number of these dogmas, derived, in the first instance, from the Scriptures and then elaborated and emphasized by its founders and their followers. It is not my purpose this morning to decide which are true, or which are not so; nor to criticize theological schools, because so large a part of the study in them concerns what is termed dogmatics. If it be interesting and instructive to study physics and metaphysics as they are systemized in science or philosophy, the same

must be true of the study of religious opinions when systemized in theology. The thought which suggests itself in connection with our text is whether the student, after leaving the Seminary, is justified in preaching theology; how far the completed results of long and thorough investigation are fitted to the wants of people, most of whom are just beginning to live the Christian life. Certainly, judging from the history of the Church as a whole, one would not suppose that, at this stage, such methods of presenting truth would be very effective. Jesus Christ did not preach dogmas—that is, the results of truth, systemized, theologically or philosophically. His method of teaching was by "precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little." Can we be sure that it was not for this reason largely that the common people heard Him[1] gladly? It was only after the Church had grown in spiritual strength that it was prepared for the semi-dogmatism of the Apostle Paul; and one could almost say it was only after it had ceased to grow that it was prepared for the completed dogmatism of Athenasius and Augustine. At all events, theology, as a method of instruction in the Church, had its origin not with the great Master, but with His followers—and some of them were followers who were a long distance away from Him.

Truth as presented in the Scriptures furnishes by no means a continuous path for thought through which logic, step by step, can advance to the appre-

[1] Mark 12 : 37.

hension of the eternal. It is more like a wilderness with mountains and valleys on either side, with paths crossing and recrossing; its truths scattered like meadow-flowers along the surface as irregularly, to all appearance, as the stars that enlighten one from above. Theology is to the Bible what botany is to the open field. Shall we teach the child of flowers by showing them to him, one by one, as they bloom along his pathway, or by first making him study some scientific treatise in which they have been analyzed? Shall we impart truth to the spiritual child through precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little, or through dealing out to him at once a philosophic system as a whole?

The question may appear at first thought of slight importance. But let us dwell upon it for a moment. Let us examine it in the light of instruction in other departments. We have found that the student in mathematics and the languages must master, one by one, through continued reiteration and practise, the elementary methods of arithmetic and algebra, of etymology and syntax. Otherwise, he never will be able to advance to the higher departments of these, because he never will be able to apply, or even to comprehend them. He may, indeed, be able to memorize geometry or Greek, and to recite in them by rôte; but a genuine, independent knowledge of them, and ability to use them, he can never possess. A man knows no more than he has mastered, "precept upon precept, line upon line." Applying this prin-

ciple to theological theory, suppose that at the beginning of a man's interest in religion, the dogmas be presented to his mind in systematic form. He may learn them by rôte and repeat them, but does he really know them? Because his teachers tell him that they contain the truth, he may stand up and say that he believes them, but does he believe them? With the power of comprehension, has he actually digested them, and made them integral parts of his own opinion? And if not, what then? —they can not exert the influence that they should exert upon his thought, his feelings, or his will. To illustrate this principle in another way, suppose, through doing hard work, I have succeeded in finding a path to the summit of a mountain. A friend at the bottom wishes to know about the view that I have discovered there. There are two ways in which I may gratify his wish. I may tell him about it, or I may come down and lead him, step by step, up the same path that I myself have trod. It is easy to determine which of the two courses will convey to him the more intelligible idea. So a teacher who has attained to certain views in the scientific, philosophic, or religious world, may merely tell others about the finished results of his labors. In this case his pupils may be able to repeat what he says, but they will have had no personal experience like his own. Recognizing this, the teacher may adopt another course. He may go down to the place where his pupils are intellectually, and from there he may lead them, step by step, precept upon precept, line

upon line, until a position is reached where they can see the view for themselves. This illustration is to the point, because, from the very nature of the case, a theological view is something that can be reached by a method of thought. It is that which a certain man thinks in view of all that he knows with reference to the Bible, and its relations to the wants of the human mind. What I wish to have you recognize is that the only way in which a man can really cause another to have the same view as himself is through not looking at it for a time, leaving it behind, and coming down to the place where the other is, and then, gradually, leading him upward. Do not misunderstand me. It is said that the instructor should not look at his own view. It is not said that he should forget it, or misrepresent it, or falsify it. It is said merely that he himself should return back through the processes of thought by which his own mind has arrived at its conclusions, until he reach that degree of progress in thinking attained by his pupils. Then, letting the pupils know all the time that there is something beyond that which they themselves have reached, he should, gradually, exercising all the while sympathy, charity and patience, lead them up behind himself. It is a mistake, too, to suppose that the higher the instructor himself has gone, the more difficult it is for him to come down to the level of his pupils,—i. e., that the more theological training one has had, the less religious influence can he exert. It is often the contrary. The more a man knows, the less does he value things not needed

as means of influencing others. It is the most unsophisticated Freshman who is the most apt to astonish the friends at home by dwelling on the most unimportant and useless experiences of his college life. And it is the man to whom the learning of the philosophic, scientific or theologic world appears most novel, who finds the greatest difficulty in ignoring a tendency to become pedantic, or, as applied to theology, dogmatic, when in the presence of those to whom such an attitude of mind can do no good.

What has been said about religious theory is equally true in the sphere of religious practise. If one would lead his fellows upward, he must come down from any position that he may have attained far in advance of them, and clasp hands with them. The character of the child, as was said a moment ago, must be trained by childish objects of interest, some of them appealing to only the pettiest passions and appetites. It is by the stick of candy, and the glass of milk, that he must be trained to moderation and temperance. If parents neglect this truth, and content themselves with tirades about gluttony and drunkenness in the forms in which these appeal to their own matured natures, the child may, indeed, echo their words and opinions, but the morality thus imparted will be formal, not vital. It is only by precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little, that self-control can be made to become an experience,—can be made to be gradually incorporated as a vital, enduring element of character.

We have all read novels—our modern literature teems with them,—in which are depicted certain evil effects upon the moral and religious life of children which were produced by the Puritanic methods of our forefathers. There must be some truth in such representations, or they never would have been dwelt upon to such an extent by writers who aim to recommend themselves to the largest possible constituency. So far as there is truth in these novels, what is it? Our subject throws light upon this question. Puritanism was a system that had for its object to purify the methods or customs of life. It aimed to make the external words and deeds of people consistent with internal purity of heart and purpose. A worthy aim most certainly! But what were the standards of Puritanism in accordance with which it sought to regulate the external methods—the words and deeds—of the child? They were the standards of people who, if not abnormally sedate by nature, had, at least, worked their way up to their mature views and habits through a long course of severe discipline. When these people took the external methods of expression of their own lives, which with themselves had been the natural outgrowths of their own experience, and attempted to make the external methods of expression of the child pair with these, the effect was necessarily either that the child should see the inconsistency between such methods and his own experience, and therefore rebel against the whole system, and, doing so, against the kind of religion occasion-

ing the system; or else that he should not see this inconsistency, and, endeavoring honestly to conform to an external method of life which was not a truthful expression of his own internal moods, should unconsciously to himself cause these methods to appear to be formal and hypocritical. So we see how Puritanism, which originated in an honest endeavor to counteract the tendency to formalism in conduct and worship connected with the established church of England, in its turn tended, in time, to develop and increase the same tendency.

In truth, all systems become formal that fail to acknowledge continually the necessity of giving a truthful expression to a man's internal thoughts and feelings. As a manifestation of advanced Christian experience, it may be very wrong for you and me to waste our days in playing cards, and our nights in dancing. But the child could not possibly be true to his nature, religious as he might become, without his games and romps of some kind. You and I may like to come to the church, and praise God in long meter tunes, and listen to long sermons. I, by no means, think that boys and girls of a proper age should not gradually be accustomed to worship God in the same way. But the livelier tunes, and the more reiterative instructions of the Sunday School, render it the true church for the children. And as regards the true church for grown people, if there be any truth in the line of thought presented this morning, it must be evident that it must be a church in which the creeds to be accepted as

the bases of confessions of faith, embody the most simple, primary elements of belief, training the mind to grasp those that are more comprehensive as it comes to them in the natural course of experience; it must be a church in which the rituals through which the Deity is addrest are expressive of the most simple, primary elements of devotion. In such a church alone can old and young, wise and ignorant, high and low, rich and poor,[1] meet together, and yet feel, equally, that the Lord is the Father as well as Maker of them all. Any place in which the whole Bible can be read and honestly interpreted as an authoritative basis of religious opinion, any gathering in which the Deity can be addrest as the God and Father[2] of our Lord Jesus Christ, and, for this reason, be adored and trusted, is a Christian Church.

Our subject teaches us, therefore, first of all, a lesson of charity. If one would exert the widest and most beneficial influence, this attitude of mind is necessary not only for the public religious instructor, but also for the private religious liver. This world contains plants and trees, flowers and fruit, plains and mountains, and one may reveal the work of the Creator as fully as the other. So in the religious world, there are, as the Apostle Paul says, "diversities[3] of gifts, but" all may be manifestations "of the same spirit." If, in the great school of life, one appear to be in a lower class than ourselves, possibly he may not be so,—only in another department. But, even if he be in a lower class, this

[1] Prov. 22 : 2. [2] Rom. 15 : 6. [3] 1 Cor. 12 : 47.

is no reason for turning him out of the school altogether. It is merely an argument in favor of going down to him in that lower class, meeting him just where he is, and giving him the sort of precept upon precept and line upon line that his condition demands.

In the second place, our subject may teach us a lesson with reference to that kind of charity exercised toward individuals which we term sympathy. Some people claim that women make better teachers, especially for young children, than men do. If this be so, it is largely because they are naturally more sympathetic. Some people say that clergymen's sons are apt to turn out badly. It is not true of them as a class. So far as it is true, it is true also of the sons of any men who become absorbed in any pursuits remote from the ordinary interests of life. Such men are almost necessarily out of sympathy with the young. In all that they do they manifest this fact. "Your father will know how to mend that, all right," said a man to a little boy whom he found crying because he had broken his toy wagon. "My father don't know anything," blubbered the boy. "He's a minister."

It is not difficult for us to recognize why fathers like this in their own homes forget with reference to other things the necessity of occasionally visiting a region where they can, step by step, lead those less experienced than themselves up to their own points of view. The effect upon the young is the same as I have shown to result from the Puritanic spirit.

These either rebel against conformity to standards entirely beyond their own, or, like parrots and apes, with no genuine acceptance of these standards, they deem it sufficient merely to imitate certain outside forms of sentiment and conduct. All such effects might be obviated through the exercise by the elderly of a little more sympathy. If the Lord Jesus could ignore the more exalted phases of his mission, in order to come down and meet men where they were, and just there go about with them doing good, we ought to be able to see that it is our duty to do the same. We ought to be patient, and even satisfied, to give "precept upon precept and line upon line," until those whom we would influence are in a condition to comprehend something better.

This thought leads us, in the third place, to recognize a lesson taught by our subject with reference to the necessity of acquiring a knowledge of human nature. I sometimes have turned from our hymn book in positive despair and almost disgust, to find how little in it gives expression to really noble, unselfish emotion. I was trying a few weeks ago to get a hymn expressive of the text, "By this shall all men[1] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." How few lines, to say nothing of whole stanzas, are there to correspond with such a thought! But then again, I have concluded that the fault probably lies in myself. If I had more charity and sympathy and knowledge of human nature, perhaps I should care and think more of the

[1] Jno. 13 : 35.

necessity of appealing to human nature as it is. "Come unto me,[1] all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," said the Master. A morbid man might call this an appeal to selfish motives; but, so far as men are constitutionally selfish, through what other motives can they be reached? Perhaps the most important thing to bear in mind is that, after they have been reached through such motives, it is possible to instruct them by "precept upon precept and line upon line," until they are prepared to appreciate something that makes a higher appeal.

But it is not merely a knowledge of human nature that is needed in order to influence men. There is needed also a knowledge of human nature as affected by religion. Our subject teaches a lesson, in the fourth place, with reference to the necessity of religious experience. This expression, let me remind you, can refer to very much more than to experiences confined to imagination or feeling. When the evils and punishments of sin have been presented to the mind upon the one hand, and the glories and gratuitousness of redemption, upon the other hand, the mind that turns from the first to the second,—from the feeling of despair produced by the former to the feeling of encouragement produced by the latter,—is often said to have experienced religion. It has had an experience of religious thought and feeling, most certainly; and if one's will have really been influenced to such extent as to reform conduct, he will,

[1] Mat. 11 : 28.

from this moment, have an experience of religion, because, so far as feeling and thought are concerned, they will tend to make him lead a religious life. But we must remember that the life itself is a very important part of the religious experience. It will not do to accept without modification, as if it were an expression of the whole process involved, the sentiment embodied in that hymn with which many of us are familiar:

> Lay your deadly doing down,
> Down at Jesus' feet:
> Doing is a deadly thing;
> Doing ends in death.

Of course, there is a certain sense in which this is true. Any man who supposes that any amount of work or worship on his part is going to earn his salvation from an Almighty God is about as sensible as a mosquito that thinks that his serenade of buzzing is going to save him from the slap of a man who wants to sleep. Whether it shall be saved or not depends upon the disposition of the man; whether a soul shall be saved or not depends upon the character of God; and Christianity teaches that we have every reason to have faith in this on account of the words and work of the Christ. This is the side of the truth emphasized in this stanza. It means that doing, as a method and the only method of obtaining salvation, ought to be subordinated to faith in the divine character.

But there is another side of this truth—doing as a necessary prerequisite for religious experience—even for the thought and feeling of this experience—

of that, there is the deepest and most constant need! "Follow me,"[1] said Jesus to the fishermen of Galilee; and, scarcely knowing why, they left their nets and followed him. But we are told that they went all the way to Cana of Galilee[2] before, in the deepest sense, they believed in Him. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know," says Hosea (6:3). "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine," said the Master (John 7:17). The truth seems to be that unless a man have started out honestly and earnestly to do the will of God, and unless, by consequence, he have failed in that endeavor, as most men must, he may never find out from his own personal experience all that is meant by relying upon the mercy of God. In other words, he can not experience all that there is in religion, except in the degree in which he starts out to do. The same thing is equally true as applied to the effect which his religious experience can have upon others. No one is fitted to teach who himself has not mastered the rudiments of the branch concerning which he seeks to give instruction. No one is fitted to guide in opinion, conduct or anything else, who himself has not advanced, step by step, along the course over which he attempts to lead. We may be certain that the spiritually inexperienced can not lead the spiritually inexperienced. Only one who has himself walked in the footsteps of the Master can have the charity and sympathy and kind of knowledge of the wants of human nature, and of the perils and encouragements

[1] Mat. 4 : 19. [2] Jno. 2 : 11.

of the way, that will enable him to be a trustworthy guide. He alone knows what precepts are worth remembering; what lines are worth retaining; what little is worth repeating; because he himself has advanced along the same course, according to the same method, "precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little."

IX

HOW TO IMPART CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."—2 Tim. 2 : 24, 25.

How shall the world become converted? How shall a servant of the Lord, whether a clergyman or a layman, in the pulpit or in the parlor, impart to others a knowledge of spiritual truth in such a manner that his lessons shall be apprehended not alone by the minds, but incorporated into the lives, of his hearers? This is the question which the Apostle moots, and is endeavoring to answer in the instructions given as quoted in our text. He is viewing the method of Christian influence as regarded in the light of its effects upon the world. "But foolish and unlearned questions," he says, "avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

The portions of the text which have suggested the thoughts with which I shall endeavor to enforce

the reasonableness of this injunction, are its first and its final clauses. The first clause is this, "and the servant of the Lord." This expression indicates the fact that the work of Christianizing the world, of influencing men through spiritual truth, is not man's but the Lord's; and that man, in all the efforts which he puts forth in order to produce the result is only a servant, an agent. The final clause is this, "if God peradventure will give them repentance"; and it indicates—what any thoughtful mind might have inferred from the former expression—that there is some part of this work which man, the servant, the agent, can not perform. He must act in the manner enjoined by God, in order that "God peradventure" may give to the one who is to be influenced "repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."

These two expressions naturally suggest a twofold duty on the part of the Christian teacher, positively, to do all possible to further that portion of the Lord's work committed to himself; and, negatively, to do nothing, so far as possible, to retard it. These two considerations should regulate his bearing. He should not strive, first, on account of what he has to do; and, second, on account of what he has not to do.

First, then, what has he to do? To advance the cause of Christianity, of course. How is this to be done? In two ways, as I conceive,—by an appeal to the heads and to the hearts of others. He has to convince their minds of the truth of Christian doc-

trine; and to communicate to their souls the spirit of Christian life.

How shall he convince their minds of the truth of Christian doctrine? How can one convince of any truth? How is anything proved,—I mean merely intellectually?—By what is termed a process of logic, —not so? What is the first condition of a successful, or, as it is termed, a syllogistic process of logic? The first condition is that it should start with some simple statement recognized as truth by both him who argues and by the one with whom he argues. For instance, a man says to another, who, for some reason, appears not to be interested in Christianity, "Christianity has an influence in the world." "Yes," replies the other; "that is true." The first continues: "Everything that has an influence in the world is entitled to consideration." "That, too, is true," replies the other. "Christianity," the former resumes, "has an influence in the world, and, therefore, it is entitled to consideration"; and, if the other acknowledge the truth of this latter statement, he will acknowledge it, as you perceive, because it has been preceded by statements with which he could agree; in other words, proof of truth concerning which men differ is based upon statements of truth concerning which they agree. To find points of agreement, therefore, is to find sure bases for argument. Those who are foremost in finding these points of agreement are foremost in being influential. Those who find points of agreement with the largest number of different minds are in-

fluential with the largest number. This is one reason why intellectual power is so often associated with liberal-mindedness. The fact that one perceives many truths in the beliefs of many people, enables him to make statements with which many can agree. And through the agency of these statements, he can lead them on to acknowledge many other and different statements with which he desires to have them agree. Accordingly, we perceive that there is a rhetorical—a logical—as well as a religious reason why a man should not strive. If we begin where we agree with one, we may possibly lead his mind on to an opinion of our own entirely different from his. If we begin by opposing him, very likely we shall lead his mind on to nothing. I am aware that there is a sort of success attendant upon intellectual narrowness, upon bigotry. But it is a success confined in effect to the sphere of thought of those holding the opinions concerning which one is bigoted, not an absolute success when considered with reference to the much broader sphere of thought lying outside of this. Bigotry may make a man an ideal of a sect, to be crowned as its idol. It can never make him an aggressive warrior who conquers in a new territory of thought that his sect has not yet entered. The strong partizan and the intense sectarian may seem to wear the purple, and to hold the scepter in politics and in religion. They exert only an apparent effect. The aggressive influence is the work of their colleagues who have broader views, who stand not in

the center but on the circumference of the sphere of the opinion of their party or of their church, where they can clasp hands with their neighbors over the border and, by keeping in touch with them, draw them, if necessary, into their own circle. You will find that the moderate partizans and the broad churchmen—the General Grants and the Dr. Tyngs —you will find that these are the men who really lead into an acceptance of their own opinions the greatest number of those inclined to differ from these. The wild beast may roar. It is the gentle horse and the faithful dog that make men treat the animals like friends. The goose may hiss. It is the unobtrusive dove that draws the children to the barnyard, and makes them generous with their grain. Therefore, merely considered as a matter of intellectual influence, if the servant of the Lord would exert this, under the most favorable conditions, he must not strive.

That he must not do so will appear still more evident when we consider not only the requirements of proof in general, but, in the second place, those of proof in particular,—those connected with the particular kind of proof which it is the function of the servant of the Lord to present. Religion is intended to satisfy wants that exist in every soul, wants, by consequence, which every individual recognizes as soon as they are made clear to him. The Christ came to the world, not so much to originate new truth, as to remove the fraud and falsehood that had covered up old truth. He came that, when these

were removed, all men, like the Prodigal, might come to themselves, to their better selves, as we say. The fact seems to be that all the fundamental truths of religion conform to requirements that God has infused into the natures of all of us; requirements prophetic of that which we should become; requirements that incline us to duty, and can find their complete fulfilment in only the standards of life presented in what we term religion. To deny this is simply to deny that religion was made for man. To admit it is to admit that, in connection with imparting to him a knowledge of religion, there is no necessity for strife. Why strive about truth, concerning which all men are really fitted to agree? Would you become angry with a child because he could not understand some explanation that he wanted to hear; or if you did become angry, would this increase your ability to be of assistance to him? Not by any means. You need not only to know more than the child, but to be apt to teach, patient, persistent, dealing out, line upon line,[1] precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. "How can you have patience," said the father of John Wesley to his mother, "to tell that blockhead the same thing twenty times over?" "Because," said she, "if I had told it but nineteen times, I should have lost all my labor." Think how many thousands in the world since then have been put under obligation to that mother for the spirit and the success of the spirit which she thus manifested!

[1] Isa. 28: 10.

But again, the servant of the Lord who would advance his Master's cause, must not only influence men's minds to receive Christian truth, but also communicate to their souls the spirit of Christian life. This, the personal influence of Christianity—the character of the Christ communicated to his immediate disciples, and from them to their followers—is its most distinguishing feature,—that which chiefly separates the Christian system of religion from all others; and this personal influence, according to every theory of Christianity, is exerted through the manifestation of one thing,—i. e., the spirit of love. The absurdity of endeavoring to communicate a spirit of love through a manifestation of a spirit of strife is evident. Like produces like; the exhibition of a feeling in one excites a similar feeling in another. Strife awakens strife in return. Only love can awaken love.

So much, concerning the reasonableness of our text considered in the light of what the servant of the Lord has to do. Let us now consider it in the light of what he has not to do. We are told that Paul may plant and[1] Apollos water; but God alone can give the increase. The servant of the Lord must conduct himself toward his fellowman in a way that recognizes the possibility of failure, if God peradventure,—i. e., if the spirit of God, working, as it always does, upon the spirit within the man—do not give "repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." Does strife as a method in-

[1] 1 Cor. 3 : 6.

dicate a recognition of the necessity of the work of the spirit of God? Wherever there is strife, there is a conflict between the will of one man and that of another. Whenever such a conflict takes place upon the subject of religion, there is an endeavor of one will to change and control from the outside, without reference to a change in spirit, the religious life of another? Yet, according to the Christian theory, such a purpose is impossible of accomplishment. Christianity involves faith in spiritual forces that first control one's inner spirit, and, afterward, through this control his outer life. How can any one influence men to trust in these, while conveying the impression that what he wishes to enforce is his own thought, feeling and will. This impression, though very slightly conveyed, may sometimes make all the difference between producing the effect of philanthropy and of tyranny. The desire to control others, when developed, has produced almost all the merely external misery of the world. Who fails to admire the young Napoleon, the champion of the oppressed people of France, when he was enlisted in their cause, and doing their will? Who admires the Emperor Napoleon enthroned by the demon of self-will? Accordingly, we see how, from the nature of the work of the servant of the Lord, whether communicating the truth or the spirit of Christianity, strife should be avoided.

This teaching of reason may be confirmed by that of experience. There was a time in history when every member of every family was kept in order be-

cause he trembled before the temper of the one with the strongest physique in that family. There was a time when every subject of every state was cowed into submission by swords and spears at right and left of every path through which a cowardly minion dared to venture. There was a time when every cringing devotee of every religious cult was forced to kneel by a hierarchy that watched and worked the visible vices of both family and state in order to secure their slavish acquiescence. We know now the results of such conditions,—brutality, immorality, ignorance, superstition, intolerance, degradation. They made the home a brothel, the state a slave pen, the church a Golgotha. These were the results wrought by the power of the prince of this world, as the Scriptures term him. Then there arose another power. It was the power of the Prince of Peace. It did not strive. Nor, at the first, was it successful. One of its missions was that it should exhibit patience; that this should have its perfect work; that its adherents should learn chiefly this,—to "wait[1] on the Lord." And they did wait. Its leader was "despised[2] and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." And yet, friends, that uncomplaining man is the one whose wisdom has guided the thoughts and whose character has molded the

[1] Ps. 37 : 34.

[2] Isa. 53 : 3, 7.

lives of those who have been the most successful in furthering real progress in the world during the last eighteen centuries. And what was the secret of his power? What but this,—that "when he was[1] reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously"? And the love that he exhibited, triumphant as it was over all the powers of strife, causing him to die rather than to resist wrongfully,—this was that which has been able to draw all men unto him. Now, do we believe in such a love as his? Do our actions evince it?

Let us learn from our subject, that gentleness is indispensable in a Christian. There is no real, permanent success that is achieved by the manifestations of any other spirit. All the angry disputes, as well as the forcible resistance, of the theologians of different parties in the church are only like so many winds and waves upon a sea that interrupt and endanger the progress of that which, but for them, would be furthered upon its course. There are emergencies in which it may be necessary for love itself to assume the form of justice. But even then, rigor can be so manifested that men shall perceive that love after all has incited it. If this impression can not be made, better to be dumb "as a sheep[2] before her shearers"; yes, better to be dead like the Christ upon the cross. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church," because the manifestation of gentleness is that which leads the

[1] 1 Pet. 2: 23.

[2] Isa. 53: 7.

world toward the universal reign of the Prince of Peace.

And let us learn again, that humility must mark the bearing of the Christian. It may be hard for us to conceive how the spirit of God can further the purposes and plans of the Christ without our assistance. Yet if the world could do without Jesus so that he could lay down his life at thirty-two, it certainly can do without us. If his earthly life could end in such a way that to all observers it seemed to be a failure, certainly ours can.

And let us learn, once more, the necessity of exhibiting, in all the exercises of our Christian life, faith in God and in his Spirit. Work as we may, the full reward of work will never come in this world. The philosophy of life consists in recognizing this fact. If we would have buoyant spirits, spirits able to survive disappointments, and to maintain energy and enthusiasm down to old age, we must learn to anticipate these disappointments; nay, more, to consider them often signs of spiritual success. Was it not so in the case of the Master? Do you remember the story of Moses when down in the rock[1] with the great hand of God pressing upon it? What could he do? He feared that he should see God and die. Yet that was his preparation for the assurance[2] that the "Lord God" is "merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness." What could he not do, encouraged by such words? Our own experience may be similar. When

[1] Ex. 33 : 20-23. [2] Ex. 34 : 6, 7.

the hand of God seems to be pressing heavily upon us, this may be because he is near. Remember his touch is always the true ordination that sends men forth to be real messengers of his grace; that truly communicates to them the spirit of his love, and enables them, clothed on with gentleness, reverent by humility, and energetic through faith, to go into all the world and so conduct themselves that, whether in a pulpit or out of a pulpit, they shall successfully "preach the gospel[1] to every creature."

[1] Mark 16 : 15.

X

THE LAW OF NATURAL DEVELOPMENT AS APPLIED TO RELIGION IN GENERAL, TO THE CHURCH AND TO THE CHRISTIAN.

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."—2 Peter 3 : 18.

Everything in the world with which we come in contact is undergoing a process of development out of one state and into another. If we think of a man, or of a nation, or of any object in nature, there will be suggested the fact that none of them present the same features today that they presented a few years or centuries ago, or that they will present a few years or centuries hereafter. Accordingly, if the writer, when giving the injunction of the text, had stopped at the word grow, his exhortation would have been superfluous. All things grow, of necessity, whether they will to do so or not. The significance of the exhortation is derived from the words following grow, "in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

If we walk through a forest, we notice trees that seem to have developed naturally into a healthful and graceful maturity. We notice others upon which neighboring growth, crowding at every side,

has had such an effect that they have developed into only a spare and sickly age. Some of the trees appear to be all trunk with no branches, only a small cluster of leaves at the top. Others seem to have received injury in their youth; something seems to have pressed against them. They have developed in a crippled, ungainly manner. Through their contorted limbs one can scarcely recognize any relationship to their straight and comely neighbors. It is like this in human life. A normal development for a man would be a growth in grace, using this latter word in its most comprehensive and beautiful sense. But a man is not left to normal development in the world. There are fellowmen crowding about him on every side, forcing his life to be narrow in experience and contracted in influence,—to become like the spare or sickly tree, neither beautiful nor useful. Sometimes, too, the weight of their example and the weakness of his own nature, prone to yield to temptation, seem to cripple and distort and well nigh crush out all possibility—not to say capacity—for improvement. It becomes a very hard thing to grow in grace when one is all his life subject to these ungracious influences.

If we would fulfil the injunction of the text, we must, first of all, understand just what it is to grow. The dictionary tells us that it means to increase, to expand; but the word is applied, primarily, to the development of vegetation; and we shall get a clearer idea, perhaps, of its exact meaning through noticing just what the process is in that department

of nature. Take a tree, for example. The first thing in it that appears above the ground is a green sprout. It is very weak. We can break it with our little finger. But, after it has grown, it becomes very strong. It might take us long hours to hew it down with an axe. Growth, therefore, implies, in the first place, increase in strength. Again, the sprout, upon its first appearance, is small; the minutest insect would hardly be obliged to turn out of its path to get around it. But, after a few years, it has pushed up and expanded so that the beasts of the field find ample shelter under its branches. Growth, therefore, implies, in the second place, increase in extension over space, in scope. Once more, the sprout is a single object. One can examine it and ascertain all its constituent elements, in a few moments. But the tree is very complex, containing root, trunk, limb, bark, leaf and sap, and, possibly, bud, flower and fruit, with skin, core and seed. One may be obliged to traverse through almost the whole region covered by the science of botany before he can finish a study of its diverse parts. And it is complex not only in material, but also in appearance. It may have red roots, brown limbs, green leaves, white flowers, yellow fruit. We may say, therefore, that the term growth, as applied to a tree, indicates increase in strength, scope and complexity.

These characteristics of growth need not be applied to a tree alone. If we think a moment, we shall recognize that they apply to the growth of all

things that exist,—a fact which merely proves, so far as it proves anything, that there is one source of creative energy, and one wisest method of bringing to perfection all its living products. Take the world considered as a whole. There was a time, after it began to assume shape, when it held little except layers of cloud and steam and molten metal, all similar in appearance,[1] limited in range, and suggesting scarcely any variety or possibility of change. But the surface grew, increasing constantly in strength, scope and complexity. Waters from the firmament were showered upon it; soil appeared; and, at the same time with its appearance, the clouds grew thin, and light dawned. Then the earth brought forth grass and herb and tree yielding fruit. Then came the full blaze of sunshine and the fishes of the sea, and the beasts of the field, and, last and noblest of all, the man, made, as we are told, in the image of his Maker.

Very similar in its main features has been the development of that for which, as the churches believe, man was created,—namely, religious life. First of all, when he was tempted and had fallen, there came the statement that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.[2] This was no more than a weak, limited, simple prophecy, a germ thrown, as it were, to the winds. From it, nevertheless, was to spring, by and by, the whole religious system. Then came the waters of the flood, overwhelming the barrenness that had been, and prepar-

[1] Gen. 1 : 1-9.

[2] Gen. 3 : 15.

ing the soil, which appeared at the calling of Abraham. After the soil, came the light, tho still behind clouds, shining dimly through the symbols of the tabernacle. Then, with the advent of the Christ, the seed of the truth sprang up, and the full blaze of heaven's sunshine poured down upon it with the influence of his spirit.

Nor need we drop the comparison here. The growth of the Christian Church has apparently continued since then to exemplify similar principles. First, the united church for three or four centuries, stretching up toward a higher life without a suggestion of anything like division, seems to resemble the trunk. Then, with the development of the Nestorian, Armenian, Greek and Roman churches, came the great branches; and with the reformation and the dissensions that followed came other branches, many of them smaller, but all unfolding new resources of power, extension and complexity, and preparing the way when perhaps all shall blend together, perfected in grace and laden with the ripened fruit of the ages. "How can you belong to a church," said a Roman cardinal to one of the prominent German reformers, "that is constantly changing?" And the answer given was in accordance with the thought that I have just presented. How could one belong to a church that did not change? Change is a sign of life, of growth, of progress. The one simple sprout where it has matured exhibits stiff limbs and bending limbs, plain green leaves, and richly variegated flowers. Who

shall dare to say that spiritual life, when it has developed, cannot find a place both for the angular walls of a Quaker meeting and for the curving arches of the cathedral; both for the plain pulpit of the Puritan, and for the gorgeous chancel of the cavalier?

But let us turn from growth as evinced in the natural world and in revealed religion to that traceable in individual life. It has come to be a recognized principle of philosophy that nothing is experienced by the race as a whole that is not in analogy with what is experienced by each individual as a separate unit. In accordance with this principle, let us compare, with successive phases of material and spiritual development already considered, those manifested in individual life as influenced by the methods of the church. In the first place, when the child is in the ignorance of infancy, he can hardly be said to have any character at all; but, at the best, only the possibility of it in the future. Like the condition described as that of Adam in the garden, his best mood is rather an indefinite promise of good than a possession of it. He has not yet eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge,[1] either of good or of evil. While still in this condition, in most of our churches, tho in others somewhat later in life, he receives the water of baptism, which is a symbol[2] of cleansing from sin, but only a symbol, for sin remains in him. So the world was washed by a flood, as one of the apostles says, as a symbol of

[1] Gen. 2 : 9, 17. [2] 1 Pet. 3 : 20, 21.

its cleansing from sin, but only a symbol, for, after it, sin remained in the world. Again, the child is trained in the family according to the law of the parent. That law is usually arbitrary. The subject of it usually does not, and can not understand the principles, the spirit, underlying the commands that he receives. "I must not do that," he says, "because I have been told not to do it." Law and the parent's will are supreme. But, after the child has become a man, he no longer gives as a reason for refraining from an act that he has been told not to do it. He has risen to a higher level. He says, "It is inconsistent with my character, as an honorable man, as a good, exemplary neighbor." Just so the world before the Advent was reared according to families. Not only in Israel, but everywhere, the law was, as the Apostle says, a school master[1] to bring men unto Christ. They were under tutors[2] and governors. But after they had been thus prepared, after intelligence could grasp the central fact of revelation, came the liberty[3] of the sons of God, and the world could worship him in spirit[4] and in truth. Once more, after the child has arrived at an age of discretion, and has come to appreciate the fullness of the glory of God as manifested in the revelation in the Gospel, then, after that, is the time when we look for the influence of the Spirit upon him with all the intensity of its powers to take its residence within him and to begin the sanctification of his character.

[1] Gal. 3 : 24. [2] Gal. 4 : 2. [3] Gal. 5 : 13. [4] Jno. 4 : 24.

This fact again reminds one that the Holy Spirit[1] is said to have descended upon the world immediately after the departure of the Christ, and the cessation of his personal work on earth, had led his followers to recognize, in all its fulness, the real significance of his mission. Look, too, at the next experience of a man at this stage of development —I mean of a Christian man, for I am drawing my comparisons now from a complete, not from a crippled specimen of humanity—what is his next experience? Very likely, just what was the experience of the Christian world during its first six hundred years,—a contest, and a stern contest, with the intellectual phases of religion,—trying to determine exact definitions for what are termed the dogmas. And what is the experience of the Christian after this? If intellectual considerations have too completely absorbed his attention, very likely a state of partial spiritual deadness, resembling again the condition of the world during the middle ages, to end, as did that, with a reformation of outward life, and a devotion to practical duties, gradually thrusting too great regard for intellectual considerations into the background, and substituting, in their place, a genuine love for all, despite differences of opinion, and thus preparing the way for those one leaves behind in this world, as well for his own soul in the world to come, to enjoy that state where the prayer of the dying Jesus shall be

[1] Acts. 2 : 1-4.

answered, and all shall be one in reality as well as in anticipation.

I have endeavored to sketch what seems to be a natural development of growth in the world, in the church, and in individual Christian life; and have endeavored also to show the analogies between them. Before proceeding, it may be well to direct attention to the fact that because the order of experience that has been indicated seems to be followed in a natural process of growth, no one need congratulate himself that he is just where he ought to be in case he happen to be passing at present through a state analogous to that of the dogmatists of the early centuries, or of the proselyters of the middle ages. For, in the first place, the individual is responsible for such a state in a sense that can not be affirmed of a whole world or of a corporate church with which, in this case, he is compared. In the second place, who can tell how long the life of the individual shall be? It behooves him to pass through all stages of development if he would present above the records of a completed experience. In the third place, the text says grow in grace. If one be in the condition described, it is his duty to grow out of it as soon as possible.

We have found that growth implies increase in strength, scope and complexity. Let us apply these ideas now, not to the superficial and external phases of individual life, but to the subtle phases of internal experience, as they reveal themselves to consciousness. The beginnings of this spiritual life

within, as we know, are exceedingly limited in all particulars. They may, perhaps, be comprehended in no more than a vague sense, when conscious of needing forgiveness, of the possibility of our receiving it. In every heart there is a craving after a realization of the idea that God is love. There is a consciousness of demerit, if not of positive sin,—a consciousness of something that separates,—that breaks up—the harmony that ought to exist between a man and his Maker. This feeling is exceedingly strong, sometimes, even in the minds of the worst classes. The power of those termed revival preachers consists in their being able to recall strongly and vividly to people the presence within them of this feeling; and then, along with it, to present a conception capable of banishing it,—a conception of God as a God of love,—that he is "long-suffering[1] to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," a conception that, according to the Scriptures, may be most completely revealed to consciousness by the thought of that man who had previously proved the divinity of his mission by the wonders that he had wrought, by the truths that he had uttered, and by his benevolent and blameless life—by the thought, I say, of this man dying upon the cross to manifest the love of God. If God[2] so loved the world that he sent this son of his to suffer and die for it; if God, and the son, so loved the world that, in order to awaken in men that faith and love which alone can purify

[1] 2 Pet. 3 : 9. [2] Jno. 3 : 16.

and make fit for eternal life,—if they were willing to do this in order that the son, when lifted up,[1] should draw all men unto him, certainly in the degree in which men come to believe this fact, they who are enemies can feel that they can be reconciled[2] to this God of love and plead the death upon Calvary as a ground of assurance that God will not impute[3] their trespasses unto them.

This feeling appears to be the beginning of a Christian experience. But it is not the whole of a Christian life. After this, there must be growth. The first vague conception that is hardly more than a surmisal of the love above must develop into the strength of an assurance. It must increase in scope, too. From feeling it must press up into intellect. Beginning, so far as opinions are concerned, with the narrowest rudiments of something learned by rote from a catechism, it must push forward through theology, science, philosophy, and, until it reach the Infinite Himself, there can be no limit to its increase. It must press outward also, to devote its energies upon the life about it,—past the friend, past the family, past the church, yes, altogether past the church as a mere formal organization, past the nation, past the world, past the throngs of spiritual witnesses above the world, until its love can reach and sympathize with him who is the all and in all. It must increase in complexity also. What seemed once only a transient experience, must become "pastime, study, rest and food." What was

[1] Jno. 12 : 32. [2] 2 Cor. 5 : 18. [3] 2 Cor. 5 : 19.

only a feeling, must become thought and deed. What was formerly but a single fruit of the spirit, must increase till, added to it, come "love, joy, peace,[1] long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," until, in fact, "we grow[2] up unto Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

We perceive, at once, that it is very difficult to follow this law of increase implied in the possession of Christian life. A man may have a few Christian principles, a germ of life, and, for this reason, may find himself, by and by, rightly situated in the midst of spiritual surroundings; but such a character may occupy the same position there that an acorn does in a landscape. Of full grown plants, of trees—of strong, broad, comely, graceful trees—how few are produced in this spiritual world! Look at the pride, the prejudice, the envy, the gossip, the bigotry, the covetousness and the deception that prevail in all of our nominally Christian communities.

Yet, altho growth is difficult, it is essential. Things spiritual, like things natural, wither and die if they do not continue to grow. The Christian's life must pass beyond its first impulse in the feelings. The truth is that mere feelings ebb as well as flow. This is their nature. If you would promote permanence in that which causes the feeling, you must give the man something capable of increasing in scope and engaging the interest of his entire man-

[1] Gal. 5 : 22. [2] Eph. 4 : 15.

hood—of intellect and hand—at times when the emotional part of his nature has become, so to speak, exhausted. There is no natural reason, either, why it should not become exhausted. A patriotic soldier does not become less a patriot because, in some lull of the battle, he has ceased to feel the impulse, or to utter the incoherent cries, of the charge. Nor does a Christian soldier, for any analogous reason, cease to be a Christian. The life of nature is not dead because the sleet sparkles where the flower bloomed, and the ice has checked the rippling of the stream. Our spiritual life is not dead because we no longer perceive the glow, or feel the thrill, that once evinced its presence. We ought not to think it dead. To think this is unfortunate, both for ourselves and for others. Why should we think it? We shall not do so in the degree in which we recognize that the essence of the Christian life is a growth in positive, practical goodness or Christ-likeness, steadily increasing in strength, scope and complexity; altho, like all life, subject, amid the shifting seasons, to storm as well as to sunshine, to snow for a covering as well as to the verdure that more particularly marks its presence.

This growth, as I have said, altho difficult, is essential to Christian life. Our text tells us that we must grow. The responsibility of this development then rests with ourselves. How can we make it possible for our own weak wills to accomplish this difficult, yet essential, duty? The text with the injunction informs us of the method of fulfilling it:

"Grow in grace," it says, "and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Our Christian life, if we have any, sprang into existence, either directly or indirectly in response to the light sent us from that source which "lighteth[1] every man that cometh into the world." Our Christian growth will be in proportion to the degree of illumination received from the same source. This is the sun which alike woos the confidence of the tiny sprout of religion when first it dares to venture from the shelter of its seed, and brings a flush upon the ripening fruit that crowds upon the topmost limb as tho to catch and to reflect the earliest signal of the coming dawn. The knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Centuries have passed since he was on the earth. Philosophy has been at work in every generation that has followed; science has investigated facts without number; morality has experimented through every range of practise; priest-craft has sought out all possible forms to cultivate piety; but neither philosophy nor science nor morality nor priest-craft has ever formed one principle controlling developments in nature, securing order in society, or promoting purity in religion at real variance with the principles and practises of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, as the world advances, the philosopher finds fresh truth suggested by his utterances, the scientist new hypotheses; each nation a higher standard for liberty; each church a holier impulse for conduct.

[1] Jno. 1 : 9.

Would you grow? Go at every stage to his words and to the ideal of life that he has left for the world. See how much you yet have to learn, to feel, to do, before you become like him. And, friends, the more you study his character, the more, I am convinced, you will become assured that it is something very different from any one of those empty effigies of piety, either ritualistic or evangelical, which this world, molding after its own vain ideal, has decked out and bowed down to as its idol. That gentle, genial, considerate, charitable, self-denying, self-sacrificing man, Jesus, is to be our model,—nothing less, nothing more. But be not discouraged. Remember his wonderful, to us well nigh unintelligible, prayer for his people: that "they all may be one; as thou Father[1] art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me; and the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be"—grow to be—"one, even as we are one."

[1] Jno. 17 : 21, 22.

XI

PROGRESS AND CONSERVATISM AS ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation."—Hebrews 6 : 1.

The whole history of education in any phase of it, so far as it proves to be a success, is a history of the course of the mind in leaving principles. If you will watch the progress of a child in any branch of learning, you will perceive the truth of this statement. Take the most common branch for example, —that of learning to read one's own language. First, are acquired the simple principles by which certain sounds are associated with certain letters. After this, other sounds are associated with certain combinations of letters; then other sounds still, with certain combinations of syllables. At first, it is a long and laborious process to spell out a syllable, a word, or a sentence. But, after a time, these principles are left behind. The man is not conscious of spelling out, or even of pronouncing, anything that he reads. He takes in a whole line of a book at a glance, and peruses page after page without uttering one audible sound. Leaving the principles of reading, he has gone on to perfection.

The same process is still more manifest when we advance from a simple to an intricate department of education. Consider the method of becoming an artist in music,—in playing, for instance, upon a piano. At first, it is extremely difficult to associate a certain position of a note upon a printed musical staff with a certain key upon the instrument. The mind goes through an extended process of thought, in order to attain this result. "A" is found upon the paper; then the key of "A" is found upon the instrument, and, after that, is sounded. At first, too, it is extremely difficult to strike the keys in succession with the proper succession of the fingers, so as to render the execution natural and easy. But, after the performer has gone on to perfection, and has become an artist, it is marvelous to watch the rapidity with which the keys of the instrument are associated with the written notes, and the facility with which the fingers execute them. Nay, stop the performer, and ask him about the principles, and it may take him a long time to recall the names of the notes, or just what fingering he has employed while transferring them to sound. Leaving the principles, he has gone on to perfection.

A similar law prevails, as already intimated, in every department of mental culture. The schoolboy probably knows far more about the technicalities of the principles of the grammar of his own or of foreign languages than does the most accomplished writer and linguist who has not had his thoughts kept especially upon these principles

through pursuing the avocation of a teacher. In fact, as men advance in years, all the details of earlier education become more or less indistinct. They have forgotten just how to repeat the rules which they once knew so well in grammar, mathematics and logic. Very likely, if they try to recall them, they state principles differing in some regards from those found in their old text books, adding or taking from them truths which their own experience has taught them to consider of greater or of lesser importance. Leaving the principles, therefore, it is the tendency of the mind, in its advance both in individual branches and in general culture, to go on from them to perfection.

This is one side of the truth. There is also another side. Our text adds to its opening phrase that we have noticed the expression, "not laying again the foundation." This must mean that if we be sure that the foundation already laid has been made deep, broad and safe, the wise course is to continue to erect the structure for which the foundation has been prepared — not to waste time in puttering over its elaboration, or ornamentation, or in preparing another, to say nothing of building somewhere else without waiting to lay any suitable foundation whatever. The Apostle intimates that the wise mind, in leaving the principles to go on, does not leave aside the principles to go away from them. It does not turn from one course into another. It continues in the same course. It does not forget or forsake the principles. It advances from the theoretic recogni-

tion to the practical use of them, in order to develop the perfection of which they are only the beginnings. Of what good is knowledge of the letters of the alphabet, or of the notes of music, or of the rules of grammar, mathematics, or logic, if they are not, some day, to develop the reader, the musician, the scholar? But if the principles have been forgotten, can they ever do this? The reader must continue to know his letters, the musician his notes, and the scholar his rudiments. If one have left aside the principles, forgotten, forsaken, or if he make mistakes with reference to them, he has, by no means, been going on to perfection. He has been going away to imperfection.

Accordingly, we see that, altho in a natural development of mind, there is a process of leaving principles, there is not a process of leaving them aside. The man is no longer conscious of spelling out his words, of thinking that "a" "b" spells *ab*, and therefore the syllable before him is *"ab."* The musician is no longer conscious of thinking that a certain note on the paper is "a" and that a certain key on the instrument is "a," and that, therefore, the one should be struck here, inasmuch as the other is written there. The matured intellect is unconscious of any process of thought connected with these first principles, yet they are latent in the mind. If one have never learned them thoroughly, or have forgotten them, he never can become perfect in reading or in performing music. Leaving the principles in order to go on to perfection, he must be

careful not to leave aside the principles in order to go away from it.

Our text applies this law of advance which, as might be shown, exists in every department of mental development, to spiritual development. Leaving principles, we must be careful not to leave them aside, or to forsake them. The principles of which the text speaks are said to be the principles of the doctrine of Christ. It is intimated here, as everywhere else in the New Testament, that a true conception of the Christ and of his mission is the primary condition of individual Christian life. Then the text goes on to add, "Not laying again the foundation." What is meant by this word *foundation*, or, rather, what is indicated in the reference to it, is indicated in the clauses following the text. "Not laying again the foundation," it says, "of repentance from dead works," as if the Apostle were contrasting with these the living works to which the Christ, as the representative of God, has called one. Then, as if detailing other doctrines considered to be fundamental, the passage mentions, "the doctrine of faith towards God,"—that is of confidence, in view of the revelation of the Christ, that God will receive the penitent soul; then is mentioned the doctrine "of baptisms," as the ordinance through which the soul becomes connected with the visible church; then, the doctrine "of the laying on of hands," through which this visible church is handed down from generation to generation of rulers; then the doctrine "of the resurrection of the dead,"

when all shall receive a new life; then, lastly, the doctrine "of eternal judgment," when the good shall be separated from the bad. These are the principles of Christianity. Leaving these principles, but not forsaking them, we are exhorted to go on unto perfection.

It is the great object of spiritual culture, just as it is the great object of intellectual culture, to develop a perfect manhood. The Christian who does not advance beyond principles is as badly off as the man who does not advance beyond the alphabet, the exercises of the first book in music, or the multiplication table. Principles are to be learned, and to be learned thoroughly; but they are to be learned in order to be used. As we are all frequently made aware, there are many people who in their Christian experience never seem to get beyond the very first stages. They have been a long time, perhaps, confessing Christians. But, like children that do not develop, they have no manly traits. They are like overgrown babes in the Kingdom. When any discouragement checks an undertaking, they either sit still frightened into doing nothing, or congratulate themselves upon having done an immense deal, because they have had sense enough to cry, or to run away. As for personal traits, they can talk glibly, perhaps, about trust in God, but their manners are self-righteous; about humility, but their actions are egotistical; about charity, but they are bigots; about a natural spiritual experience, but their expression of it betrays something altogether artificial and for-

mal. This latter fact makes them the source of accusations of cant and hypocrisy so frequently attributed to church members. Very likely, however, they are not consciously guilty of either. Many of them have merely not left the principles. They have grown old without going on to perfection. Like children spelling out their words in the first reader, or bungling over their exercises on the piano, everything that they do in the direction of religious activity is stiff and unnatural. If they had been developing themselves, there would be in them many more indications of the presence of love to exert an attractive influence upon the life of the world about them.

I have spoken of one class to be found in every community. There is also another, and a larger class, of those who have left the principles, and whose progress in spiritual experience is beyond question. In their younger years, or when they first made confession of their faith, they were, perhaps, rash and imprudent defenders of their own peculiar theories. These alone seemed to engage their entire attention. Very likely, in order to enforce upon others their belief in these, their treatment of those opposed to them, even of their own children, was severe and dogmatical. They appeared, at that time, to evince acceptance of the doctrines, but possession of few of the graces of Christianity. Yet as years have passed, one after another of these faults have disappeared. Those who manifested them have become patient and pru-

dent, willing to acknowledge the worth of a loving, spiritual life, no matter with what peculiar view or in what sect it may be found. They have grown long suffering and forbearing with those opposed to them; and so indulgent to their grandchildren as almost to alarm the caution of a parent who is less mature. Their entire bearing indicates far greater emphasis expended on the graces than on the doctrines of Christianity. Instead of being partizans of a portion of the Christian world, they have become patrons of institutions intended to benefit the whole of it. Leaving the principles, they have gone on to perfection. Nevertheless, if you question them, you find that they have, by no means, left aside the principles. They answer your inquiries, very likely, just as different scholars in an intellectual branch answer questions concerning the rudiments of that branch. The responses seldom come exactly in the phraseology that was learned by rôte in youth, but modified according to the discoveries of individual experience in maturity. One may lean to progressive views, another to those that are conservative; and yet, wherever there is true spiritual life, you generally find that the man possessing it, if able to interpret his own motives, has by no means left aside the principles which Paul enumerates as the principles of the doctrine of Christ.

This same order of growth, so apparent in the experience of the individual Christian, is wonderfully apparent in the experience of the Christian Church as a whole. At first, as you know, it was

almost entirely engaged in laying the foundations of the doctrines. By the sixth century, almost all these doctrines had been discussed in full, as well as enlarged, as theologians very appropriately used to term the process, in written standards. Despite, however, the number of those then considered saints, the standards of religious life and practise were not, at that period, all that one could wish. The Apostle Paul rebukes the Corinthians for carousing, even to the extent of getting drunk, at the communion table;[1] and records of the immorality and violence connected with the rise of monasticism and clerical power during years that followed are too well authenticated to need any more than mention. But the church has grown. It has left the principles to go on, as we hope, to perfection; and its chief topics of interest in our day are no longer concerning these doctrines of which the Apostle speaks, but, like the interests of an aged man, topics concerning the practical bearings of government and of discipline in its organization as a whole, and of exemplary and moral character in its individual members. Tho the church is divided into sects today, the majority of these have arisen not because their adherents have left the first principles, mentioned in our text, but because they differ as to the best method of carrying on these principles to perfection. These different sects are just what ought to be expected in a natural development of Christian life, just as different theories always result from differ-

[1] 1 Cor. 11 : 20-24.

ent personal experiences of individuals. There are in Europe different schools of both music and painting. The theories of the masters of these differ widely. It would be absurd to say that, therefore, the masters of either one or the other do not succeed in promoting the cause of music or of painting. Yet no more absurd than to say, merely because of slight differences in theory, that denominations equally anxious to fulfil in practise the principles of the doctrine of Christ are not successful in promoting in their way the cause of Christianity. More than anything else today, the visible church needs to recognize the opposite, taught as well by common sense as by every analogy that can be logically drawn from the natural workings of the human mind.

At the same time, while acknowledging that it is the tendency of life, according to the impulses of its own individuality, to advance from principles, there is no necessity of supposing that to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ is to forget or to forsake them. You never can produce the best kind of fruit in an orchard by rooting out its trees. You must leave the roots where they are, and into their trunks or limbs engraft the new stems. So with spiritual fruit. We must leave everywhere that we find it the old truth, in so far as it is truth, and graft on to it the new. It is philosophical to think that interpretations and understandings of religious life will differ, according to the different degrees of knowledge, and the different ways of thinking, of the different ages; but it is equally philosophical to

think that religious life, in its essence, must remain, in every age, the same. If so, we seem forced to think, too, that the true church of the future will be some legitimate development out of the old church of the past; and that this, in certain fundamental features, must continue the same so long as the Sovereign of the Church is one God, eternal in foresight and immutable in wisdom. What churches need today is not to break away from all their old standards of faith and doctrine, but to draw clearer distinctions in this intellectual age between intellectual and spiritual methods of apprehension and application. Leaving the principles, once maintained with dogmatism, hierarchy, and bigotry, they need to go on to perfection of practise, where all are a royal priesthood;[1] and love gives[2] the divine right to exercise the royal prerogative.

The inferences with regard to practical life to be drawn from our subject are very apparent. The text is a rebuke to those, in the first place, who never advance beyond principles. The legitimate effect of such a state is the same as that of indolence upon a child who never advances beyond the rudiments of a branch of education. He fails to go on far enough to enjoy the branch for himself, or to benefit others by it. What pleasure from playing music does one derive who has never got beyond the exercise book? And what appreciation of musical composition could such a state of progress awaken in others? If I should desire to cultivate love of music in a com-

[1] 1 Pet. 2: 9. [2] Jno. 13: 35.

munity, I should start by drilling the beginners in it, until they had advanced to perfection, until they had become artists. Then they would take pleasure in their work, become enthusiastic about it, and, by their performances, excite the interest and emulation of others. In the same way ought one to cultivate the Christian graces; advance from the principles to perfection, become himself an artist, modeling after Christ, his great ideal, until, by his exemplary life, he should excite the admiration and aspiration of his fellows. "Let your light so shine[1] that others may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven,"—this is the philosophical and, as it seems to me, the Biblical, theory of true Christian influence. But, simple as the truth seems to be, do half the number of so-called Christians act according to the theory? Nay more, do they see or feel the importance of acting so? How often does one meet with persons whose whole Christian life seems to consist of nothing more than an embodiment of the spirit of interference,—of something to make uncomfortable both themselves and those around them! They are very far behind. They are all the time laying the foundation of repentance from dead works. There is constantly about them an atmosphere of death,—nothing life-giving. They have scarcely advanced so far even as to have faith toward God. If they had, they would be much more cheerful in their own dispositions, as well as charitable toward others. And, as an effect of this rudi-

[1] Mat. 5 : 16.

mental Christian experience, how many Christian families and schools are there in which precepts of love are dealt out through tones like those of Diogenes and Xantippe! How many people there are who seem to think that principles are all that are necessary for Christian life, in themselves or to produce it in others! Just as tho we should lure a child on to music, not by showing him how sweet are the strains of completed harmony, but by dinging over constantly the exercises! Or as tho one should lure him on to his letters, not by reading the beautiful tales of the books, but by repeating in endless monotony, "h—e, he; m—e, me." It is not merely the empty sounds of words inviting one to trust in Jesus that shall convert the friend. It is the degree of perfection of the soul that has embodied in itself the principles of Jesus, spoken out instinctively and naturally through every tone of the voice, shift of the countenance, movement of muscle, or tendency of the thought. It is by indirect as well as by direct appeal. It is through character, expressing advance and attainment in individual spiritual life. This good seed to be sown and to spring up and to bear an abundant harvest will be gathered not from the mere sprout such as first appears in the springtime, but after has been brought forth "the fruit[1] of the Spirit,—love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

Our text is a rebuke, in the second place, to those

[1] Gal. 5 : 22.

who forsake principles; who instead of going on to perfection in the same course as that of which the principles were the initiatory steps, either attempt to reach perfection without having at any time any principles of the doctrine of Christ, or, if they have ever had these principles, to reach perfection by going away from them. It is bad enough for a man in any department of action to have no principles. It is especially bad for a Christian. A great deal is said in our times by classes of people who call themselves socialists, or humanitarians, about the inefficacy of Christianity to meet the individual or social wants of modern civilization, or, if not of its inefficacy, of the sufficiency of schemes that have nothing whatever to do with the Christian church. To these people our present standards of morality seem to be so high, and the necessity of loving one's neighbor seems to be so apparent that, in their opinion, benevolent associations and philosophical expositions of the truth are all that are needed in order to bring men to a knowledge of their duty. Alas for the omnipresence of truth! The very articles devoted to an endeavor to enforce this view are filled with expressions which discredit their statements. Therein, one reads of Christian civilization, Christian culture, Christian treatment of neighbors, and love of animals, and, contrasted with these terms, the words heathenish and pagan,—epithets that slip out in spite of all caution, and suggest the truth that all modern ideas that indicate true progress, either in individuals or in states, are, in

an essential way, connected with a development of the principles of Christianity. In a country where there is a high state of musical culture, one finds hundreds and thousands who, without any knowledge of the principles of music, appreciate it, and produce it with some degree of accuracy. Allow once the opinion to prevail in such a community that there is no necessity of retaining the principles, of having schools in which this art and its artist can be properly cultured in its rudiments, and very soon all taste and ability to produce good music will decline in that community. Why should not the same effect be produced upon Christian civilization where there were no high attainments of spiritual life in the individual, or where there were no churches fitted to train such a life?

In an orchard in Spring-time, the trees are covered with blossoms, all of which appear to have an equal purpose and an equal beauty. Yet thousands of those blossoms fall to the ground without having accomplished the object of blossoming. From only a few of them is fruit developed. It is so with spiritual growth in the world. There is a blossoming here of theory and of practise, and to the surface observer all the blossoms may appear alike,—moral aims may seem to have the same beauty as Christian aims, and philosophical ideals the same as religious ideals. Yet, the blossoms of the one may fade away without result, while those of the other may remain to bear fruit for eternity. Let us see to it that our life and our ideas are not merely a superficial re-

sult of the overflowing abundance of spiritual growth on every side of us,—that they are not produced in spite of our own wishes, as if by contagion, in order to accompany what is of real worth. Let us see to it, rather, that they are the results of spiritual elements,—of life within the soul which shall remain and develop into fruit, the perfectly ripened fruit of the gardens of Paradise.

The figure employed by the writer of our text is, in itself, very striking. "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation." We all know the conditions where men are laying foundations,—unhewn stones here and muddy pit-holes there. You and I, friends, have bodies and a bodily existence, which, we are told, are, if we be Christians, temples [1] of the Holy Ghost. How can they be temples fitted to promote the glory of the Holy Ghost if the foundations have never been laid? Away with the rubbish! Let the stones be cut and polished, and lifted to their places! Let the soil about be leveled, and laid out, and sodded. When turret and spire, blending into outlines of perfect symmetry, push up to remind one of the heavens; when, from within, the deep music of the heart trembles and throbs like the diapason of the organ; when, joining in its praiseful strains, flow forth the voices of love, joy,[2] peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,—then and then alone shall one's life be appropriately

[1] 1 Cor. 6 : 19. [2] Gal. 5 : 22.

employed upon the worship of God within, or fitted to glorify him through manifesting the worth of the principles of the doctrine of Christ to the world that regards it from without.

XII

HOW TO APPROPRIATE THE DISCIPLINE OF DISAPPOINTMENT

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."—2 Cor. 4 : 17, 18.

The way in which we regard an event makes a great difference with the way in which it affects us. Two young writers desire equally to attain a high rank in literature. Both publish books, and both books prove failures. They are perhaps mercilessly criticized. To the one author the chagrin of failure is such that it seems to cast a shadow over his entire life. It has so disheartened him that he never again has courage to attempt anything requiring extraordinary effort,—to achieve any of those plans of which he was accustomed to speak so fervently in his youth. To the other, the disappointment gives but a passing pain which acts like a spur upon a high spirited horse goading on to renewed exertion. He becomes more of a man than he would have become, had he been successful at the first. Two persons meet with what is mildly termed a disappointment in love. The one mourns

and meditates upon it, until it overcomes him. The eye of hope within him seems to be blinded. A dark curtain of despair seems to be hung over all his future. No more prospects loom before him, such as once aroused him to interest and action. He sits still, and stays in the place where misery found him, a broken-hearted man with nothing to cheer in the present, or allure in the future. The other may drink the cup of sorrow to its dregs, but he takes the potion merely as a bitter tonic, and starts up to work off its effects. His nature becomes conscious of greater depths through the sufferings that have been welled from them, and of greater strength through the effort that has been put forth to resist their overflow. The armies of two nations fail in battle. With the one, as with the Austrians, when defeated by the Prussians in 1867, that single test is decisive. All that the enemy desire they gain. With the other, as with our own countrymen when defeated at Bull Run in 1861, that one test serves only as a discovery of weakness, to nerve the people anew for a stronger and a longer struggle. Accordingly, I say, that the way in which we regard an event makes a great difference with the way in which it affects us.

The reason of this we may be made to understand by considering the object of these events. To one who believes in such a thing as Providence, they seem, whether advantageous or disadvantageous, to be intended to be not final but disciplinary. Let us go back in the chapter in which our text occurs, and

notice how plainly this truth is brought out. "We are troubled on every side," says the Apostle, "yet not distrest. We are perplexed but not in despair; persecuted but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed; knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus; for all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not, for our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." In other words, the Apostle has recognized that life is disciplinary, and that all events should be regarded as parts of the processes rendering it so. If the aspirant for literary eminence do not care so much for the relative rank of his first effort, as for the absolute rank, the ultimate excellence beyond criticism, that he desires to attain as a writer, then the disappointment following the failure of his first venture will be overbalanced by the consciousness of how much he has learned from it. If the lover do not care so much for his personal gratification and prestige, for his private pain and public humiliation, as for that sympathy and comradeship which every soul craves and needs in order to realize its highest ideal of influence, then the loss that has come to him may turn to gain in the recognition that it brings of the craving for love that is in the heart, not of one, but of every man. If the rulers or the people of a nation do not care so much for glory won upon a battlefield, as for the

general welfare to secure which their government exists, and for the principles which it represents and seeks to advance through the agency of war, then a single defeat may merely prove the precurser of victory, because this defeat has merely evinced the danger to which good is always exposed wherever all its adherents are not putting forth all their powers in order to defend it. The same principle applies to every disappointment. If we look upon property as the end of earthly existence, then, as soon as the property is taken from us, we feel as tho existence itself were no longer desirable. But, if we prize what we have mainly as a means of developing other possibilities, of giving us position, and of widening our influence, then, when it is gone, we need not feel as if everything were gone; but merely as tho a very important, perhaps the most important, instrumentality that we might have employed, is no longer available; and, with spirits chastened but not subdued, we are ready, in the absence of this one instrumentality, to turn and to make use of others still present with us. So, again if we look upon friends as the end of love, so soon as they are taken from us we feel as though love itself must die out because there seems no longer any object upon which it can be exprest; but, if, with gratitude in our hearts, we become accustomed to recognize them as agencies for developing in us unselfishness, geniality, and kindliness; if we become accustomed to recognize them as beings sent to the earth in order to let us experience in partial degree

what is the boon and blessedness of an existence where all is love, then, when they are removed, we feel thankful that we have been permitted to know the joys of such companionship; that it is "better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all"; and, tho this means of attaining happiness be absent, we strive to the best of our ability to exercise love according to the means still remaining.

Again, our "light affliction worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory while we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen," not only because the events of life are disciplinary, but because life itself is progressive. The fact that events are disciplinary implies that the man is moving on. Otherwise, Providence itself could not discipline him, any more than a gardener could train a vine that was not itself, all the while, growing. The context of the passage before us brings out this idea also of life as progressive. "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus and shall present us with you. For which cause we faint not; but tho our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." The main trouble with people, when they succumb to disappointment, is that they fail to perceive this fact,—that every moment of life after a disappointment is carrying them away from it. They are just as well off after the loss as they were before they began the course that has ended so unsuccessfully. Nay, more. They are better off, because they have all the stored ex-

perience of the past from which to draw, and by which to be guided. I was once on a car in a railway accident. After a few fearful lurches, a jar and a crash, all was still for a moment. Immediately after that, the passengers began to shriek. One burly countryman cried out, "There is no use of making any noise. If you are not hurt or dead now, you'll not be." After one has seen the flash of lightning, there is nothing to be feared from the thunder following it, however loudly it may roar. The wise man rises up when adversity has passed him, thankful if he can rise,—if he have been harmed but slightly, if the flame have only dazzled his eyes, if the report have merely made his ears to tingle. You have seen the gardeners in spring-time lopping off the lower limbs of the trees in order that the sap may not be exhausted upon them, but may press up, and develop the higher and more important branches. You and I have affections that develop themselves too near to the earth. They need to be lopped off—torn out by the roots if necessary—in order that the energies of the soul may push upward and develop themselves in a higher range of action.

But, once more, "our light affliction worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory while we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen," not only because events are disciplinary, and because life is progressive, but, also, because experience is transitory,—always moving out of one state and into another. Here is a man who starts out with the idea that he is fitted

to be, say, a clergyman. He has a few qualifications for that profession, perhaps; but not a sufficient number of them. He tries it for a long time, and fails utterly. He has not the creative power, the address, the imagination, or the tact required for the work. But he has other resources. He has traits that fit him, perhaps, to be an exceptionally good business man. He is one of those persons endowed with an ability almost like that of Midas, an ability to make about everything that he touches turn into gold. Nevertheless, though conscious of this, for a long time, he resists the logical conclusion to be drawn from it. He is stubborn. He will not turn away from that which he has once undertaken,—forgetting that the only beings in the universe who are justified in not changing their minds are monomaniacs. He thinks about putting his hand to the plow, and turning back; but does not take into account the fact that there is no sense in continuing to plow where the soil is barren. He recalls that rolling stones gather no moss; but he is willingly oblivious of the fact that soil from which the stones are not moved grows no grain. But, by and by, in spite of his refusing to recognize the voice of God in Providence, he apprehends the force of Providence, when, without being able to resist, he is pushed out of the one sphere and into the other; yet even then he feels, at first, like Joseph when he was stript of the coat of many colors, and sold to the Egyptians. He is terribly down hearted about his whole experience; but, after all, this, as he finds out later, is

the only thing that could possibly have made his life a success, and himself the center of great influence for good.

When we consider what may be termed spiritual success, it is easy enough to perceive that there is a sense in which the same principle is applicable to all of us. We all have bodies, and also souls. We are fitted to live in a material realm, and also in a spiritual realm,—the one belonging to time, the other to eternity. At first, we are prone to devote ourselves entirely to bodily—material and temporal—interests. But we fail in these. Every one of us, sooner or later, fails in them. Why? Because we are not fitted for continued success in them. We have spiritual—immaterial and immortal—natures which can attain enduring success only in something different. So it is necessary for us to fail a score of times, perhaps,—until, finally, we discover the line of action for which our souls are fitted. Like the prodigal son, a large number of us must come to ourselves—to our higher better selves—among the husks and the swine. All this life, in fact, to all of us, must be, in some regards, a failure in order that we may be successful in the next life. "Tho the outward man perish, yet the inward man" may thus become "renewed day by day. Our light affliction which is but for a moment" may thus "work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen."

I have endeavored to show what effect this habit

of looking beyond into the unseen has upon the influence exerted upon us by afflictions. In the first place, we do not regard them as final, but as disciplinary, and we endeavor to learn the lesson which they are designed to teach. In the second place, we do not, in thought or action, regard our career as ended by them, because life is progressive. So we do not sit down and die, physically or spiritually, where they found us, but we go forward prepared to avail ourselves of our experience and to act more wisely in the future. And, in the third place, we do not regard true life as a failure, even tho everything seems taken from us, because experience is transitory,—a means of transition out of one state and into another; and we know that, even tho we may be stript of friends and fortunes, even of our body itself, we have nevertheless a friend on high, a tabernacle not made with hands, and a soul that has been taught, at last, amid the loss of earthly treasures, to set its affections upon things above.

The great lesson that the text is designed to teach, the lesson of which we need so often to be reminded in this world, is a lesson of faith,—to learn to walk by that and not by sight; strengthened by that to be content to leave old things behind, and to press forward to that which is new. What should we think of a butterfly that should crawl out of its chrysalis and sit down with folded wings, never attempting to fly, and mourn and mourn to think that it must leave that dear old shell, the result of so much labor and so much time, behind it. You and I,

friends, are at work weaving very comfortable surroundings for ourselves. But I have no doubt that to the eyes of higher intelligences, all these material wrappings in which we like to envelop our souls seem very ugly; and they would seem very useless, probably, had not those wiser spirits learned that other fact about them,—that, before long, according to the laws of an immutable God as well as of a kind Father, the chrysalis will break apart and disclose—what? A poor, shivering, naked soul? No, no;—not while we look at the things which are not seen! Far more beautiful than those wings must appear, in the first light that breaks through his prison, to the eye of the insect that has known hitherto only the experiences of the worm, must appear its newly acquired spiritual wings to the soul, as it mounts to soar amid the sunlight which pervades the higher regions nearest to the holiest.

I have tried to explain the principle underlying this text. One question, however, remains to be answered. How shall one become enabled so to look to the things which are not seen as to have all light afflictions work for him a weight of glory. In the first place, as I conceive, by trying at all times to keep clearly before the mind the conception of the Fatherhood of God, to consider constantly how all experiences are sent by him in order to develop and to perfect character.

In the second place by cultivating, while they are present with us, a spirit of meditation upon the real value of the objects that we possess. They are valu-

able partly in themselves and partly in the thoughts and feelings which they suggest and may cultivate. It certainly would be an advantage if one could regard them in such a way that, after the objects themselves are no longer visible, the thoughts and feelings which they suggest may remain. The thoughtful, philosophical mind might thus find, from personal experience, that it is "far better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all." As I have already intimated, property is valuable in itself as an immediate power for doing good. But it may be made valuable for its effects also upon the thoughts and feelings. It may lift a man into a sphere where he can associate with those who have culture, and where he can obtain culture for himself. More than this, it may lift him into a sphere where all the grandest aims of commercial enterprise and of benevolent activity open to his vision and enlarge the range of his interests. Well, now, all these can remain after the property has been taken away. The man who has been enterprising and benevolent, while possessing it, may be left, after the loss of his material wealth, a larger and more generous character than he ever could have become if he had never had the wealth. It is only the miser that is not left so.

And this truth applies equally to the loss of other objects besides wealth. Why is it that men in affliction turn to the Bible, to meditative prose, and to poetry, and derive comfort from the perusal of them? Because the books containing them were

written largely by those who themselves have met with losses, and who are expressing the thoughts and feelings that remain in their minds after the objects which they cherish have been removed from their sight. They are the fruits of experience that have become ripened only after the leaves of life have lost their freshness and are beginning to fall in a shower of death all about one.

Every man should try to be his own philosopher, and his own poet. He ought to have his eye fixed upon an object in such a way that, whenever the object is taken from the field of vision, there will be more than a blank left to recall it; his soul should be deep and clear and reflective; like a mirror it should receive into the depths of his being and hold there those features that are worth retaining. It should be able to photograph them, making them an inseparable, imperishable, immortal part of himself. Objects, I say, are valuable in themselves, and in what they suggest. But what they suggest exists in the region of thought, of soul; it is unseen,—a part of this unseen life of which the Apostle in the context that I have read to you speaks; of that unseen life which makes the child faithful to the words of the mother who died in his youth; which makes the youth faithful to the unseen being who died amid the holy days of first love; which made the disciples faithful to the unseen Christ after his crucifixion; which makes the church faithful to the continued sway of his unseen spirit; which makes

you and me, if we be Christians, faithful to the unseen power that regenerated us.

And, finally, in the third place, if one can commune at all with the unseen world, if there be any power in prayer or in the reading of the Scriptures, by which it may be brought near to the mind, should we not make use of this power? With the soul's eye, if not with the body's eye, should we not scan the heavens, and try to catch a glimpse of the glory, of the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" which is in store for those "whose outward man may perish, but who are renewed in the inner man, day by day," and, who on some bright morning, may be permitted to burst this chrysalis of flesh and soar with spirit-wings across a little space of clouds that gather over a sea of blue, and then approach that shore whose harbor lights are stars that flicker from infinity, whose welcoming glare at the wharf is the dawning glory of the eternal day.

XIII

UNCOMMON OPPORTUNITIES IN COMMON OCCUPATIONS

"Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men."—Luke 5 : 10.

There is a significance indicated by actions that are seen which does not always attach itself to words that are uttered. When Diogenes seized that lantern of his, and lighted it, and groped through the crowded street of Athens at broad noon-day, sneering out "I seek a man," all who saw him felt that there was a vitality embodied in that sarcasm upon humanity. It merited, as well as received, unusual remembrance, whereas the same thought exprest in mere language would have been forgotten.

Actions of this kind intended to impress truth upon the mind by a visible representation of it, are recorded not only in secular but also in sacred history. As you may remember, Ezekiel,[1] on one occasion, gathered a number of his goods together in a bundle, and placed them on his back, and journeyed through the streets of Jerusalem, till he reached the wall, and then dug a hole through this. Of course, he was asked his reason for doing so. In reply, he said that thus should Israel and her

[1] Ez. 12 : 1-12.

princes do when the time of their captivity should come. We may remember also how the prophet Agabus [1] met the Apostle Paul in Cesarea, and took the Apostle's girdle and bound his own hands and feet with it, saying, "so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle."

If other philosophers and prophets were accustomed to make truth appear significant through these visible embodiments of it, much more, perhaps, should we expect that Jesus would do this. So far as he had a Divine message, so far he would pursue Divine methods. But what are Divine methods? What is that Divine method of which we know the most? Is it not this very way of embodying invisible truth in a form made visible? What is all creation but an expression, in the operations of Nature that are seen, of the laws and thoughts of him who is not seen, whose messages are too subtle and too spiritual in essence to be otherwise apprehended through our gross material senses.

Accordingly, it strikes me as thoroughly consistent with all that we should expect from Jesus that he should adopt this method of presenting truth. Indeed, in the transaction that we are to consider this morning, there seems something so natural—natural, in the sense of being analogous—to the laws of existence in the world, whether physical or mental, that one could almost claim that this fact alone, without further proof, would furnish strong

[1] Acts 21 : 10, 11.

presumptive evidence that the mind of Jesus was at one with the mind of the Creator of all things. At any rate, starting, as most of us do, with this conception and, by consequence, trying to compare his methods pursued here with God's methods pursued everywhere, there is much of instruction and encouragement to be drawn from the story.

It was shortly after the Master, at the beginning of his ministry, and before he had selected his disciples, had been driven from Nazareth, on account of a discourse of his in its synagogue, and had fixed his abode at Capernaum, that, early one morning, he found himself upon the shores of the Lake of Galilee. At this hour, perhaps, he had sauntered out merely to have quiet for meditation, or for undisturbed communion, as we say, with nature. Possibly he had sought the locality because it was the market place. He may have come to make some needed purchases; or, what is more than likely, to meet the people as they gathered there to buy or to sell. Whatever may have been his motive, very soon a multitude surrounded him. In their eagerness to hear his utterances they pressed upon him. The shores of the lake were level. There was need of some place from which he might be seen and heard by those at a distance. What should he do? Close by the shore, he saw two ships. They were not in use. The fishermen had left them, and were washing their nets. Very naturally, it occurred to him that he might use a ship as a substitute for a pulpit,

especially as one of them belonged to a friend of his. It was Simon Peter's. This was the man whom he had met, a few months previous, further down the Jordan, where John was baptizing. Simon, too, was in his ship. He had not gone out of it with the other fishermen to wash the nets. So the Master availed himself of this opportunity, and, asking Simon to thrust out a little from the land, where all could see him, he sat down in the ship and taught the people.

This introduces the first lesson that seems to be suggested by our subject. It concerns the degree in which our ability to do good may lie in the use that we make of our own possessions. If Peter, this poor fisherman, had been asked to build a pulpit in some expensive synagogue, he would have been perplexed enough. And, as it was, very probably, with that earnest spirit of his, he had already been troubled to think how much more for the cause of the Master could be done by those rich merchants of Capernaum than by himself. Perhaps, at times, he had been not a little jealous of that centurion, whose servant the Master had subsequently healed, to think that this mere heathen soldier had been granted such a store of worldly means that, without the help of others, he had been able to erect a synagogue. But, however this may have been, certainly Peter had never dreamed that his rude fishing boat, reeking with its smell of tar and fish scales, could, at any time, be used as the pulpit of the greatest preacher in the world, when addressing one of the largest,

most attentive, and, perhaps, most memorable of audiences that the world has ever known.

Yet so it was to be. And just so, friends, no matter how small or insignificant our possessions, we, too, may find some use for them that shall cause them to be of the greatest possible benefit and blessing to our fellows. The earth is the Lord's. All things are his, the small as well as the large. He may use the infinitesimal as well as the infinite. No degree of spiritual ability can be estimated by material measurements. Whatever instruments may be used for divine purposes, they all derive from the divine touch equal sanctity. And so, we need not wait for wealth or station, for palaces or thrones, before we can exalt, or further, the cause that we think holiest. We need but to devote to it that which we already have. The man who lives in a cottage that contains no more than a single room, if this be made sacred by the presence of a consecrated purpose, and the persuasion of a wisdom echoing of inspiration, may make that room more truly dedicated to the glory of the Lord than could be the loftiest temple reared above the most expensive shrine. The man who owns a cart that can convey no single soul in comfort or with safety to itself, if, nevertheless, it help along the bearer of a message of encouragement and promise to a fellow-soul who else were lost in disappointment and despair, may make that cart more efficacious to advance the cause of righteousness than the most glittering chariots of the warriors sweeping on to victory, and

then vanishing in clouds as fabled in the legends of mythology. None of us need wait one moment for the means of doing good. We have but to apply to good those things that we already hold on hand. And who is there that possesses nothing? What if all material fortunes fail us? So long as owning but a voice that can proclaim the truth, a face that can grow brighter smiling to approve the right, a hand that can give a warmer clasp in token of a worthier love, a foot that can tramp a little nearer toward some fellow-soul in need of sympathy, so long do we possess as noble means of influence as spirits can deserve, no matter what they may desire. We need despond in so far only as we fail to use what we possess. But, if we fail in doing this, better would it be for us if our resources were even less, better to pluck out one eye, to tear off one hand, and cast it from us, than, with two eyes, or with two hands, neglect to dedicate them to the service of our fellows.

Our subject suggests a second lesson here,—namely the degree in which our ability to do good may depend on our attending to our own business. We have noticed how far our ability to do good may lie in the use of our own possessions. That lesson had to do with what we own. This has to do with where we work. Our blessings come in the pathways of our own duties. These fishermen became the witnesses of the wonders of this day, and were subsequently called to do great things for the Master, because they happened to be found here in the morning hard at

work in their legitimate employment. As can easily be proved from their after history, they were men of larger views and larger hearts than most of those by whom they were surrounded. They were thus the very men to be discontented with their lot as fishermen, the very men to be tempted to neglect their duty here, because, forsooth, providence had not given them some duty elsewhere. But if they had had such feelings, they had not allowed their despondency to affect their actions. Through all the night they had toiled and taken nothing, and now, at sunrise, they were preparing their nets for a new venture. I say that they were men of large views and large hearts,—the very kind of characters that all the world praise in the abstract and dislike in the concrete,—characters of energy and enterprise, that have ideals of betterment, and that, struggling to attain these, lift themselves and all about them some steps nearer perfection,—characters that live immortal in our histories because, throughout their earthly lives, they turn their backs upon the present and move forward, and succeed in leading others forward, toward the future. Such characters had Peter, James and John. Such characters, perhaps, tho Providence may yield to them a much more narrow sphere of influence, have some of those before me now. Yet, noble as their like may prove themselves at times, through what they do, there are peculiar dangers that attach themselves to their peculiar temperaments. The man whose impulses and aims are of a more contracted sort is

far more likely to become a source of gratification to himself, and of comfort to his fellows. The restless struggle of the soul to see some vast result or to do some mighty deed, is apt to find a vent in petulant experiments upon the one hand, or in disheartened indolence upon the other. Such souls grow fickle in their undertakings, and dissatisfied with their achievements. And, if they yield to either tendency, the rising flush of promise in their lives is apt to turn, ere long, into the blush that follows the chagrin of non-fulfilment. In connection with this, they seem gradually to come to dislike even themselves. For this reason, very naturally perhaps, many of them seem to succeed in teaching almost everybody else to do the same. Indeed, your intellectual, high-spirited idealist, unless he has learned to restrain his earliest impulses, is not apt, after a little, to prove himself a successful candidate for popularity, or for—what is very much more important—the influence accompanying popularity. Before it can be otherwise with him, he must learn two things: first, to persist in doing with his might what his hand or head finds to do; and, second, as a part of this and furnishing a motive for it, to wait patiently till Providence, in accordance with its own laws, has brought about the result which this course is fitted to accomplish.

Let us observe now how the Master, according to the record before us, unfolded these two requirements of character. When he had finished speaking to the multitude, he said to Simon: "Launch out into the

deep and let down your net for a draught." Simon answered: "We have toiled all night and have taken nothing, nevertheless, at Thy word, I will let down the net," and, immediately after, the net was cast. Now let us mark what followed. The fishermen "inclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their net brake, and they beckoned unto their partners which were in the other ship that they should come and help them, and they came and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink." Then Peter, amazed at the result, "fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, oh Lord!' for he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes that they had taken." These men, undoubtedly, had been accustomed to associate the interest and the influence of the Master with some extraordinary occupation or emergency. To have what they considered an indication of his interposition given them as a reward for perseverance in this, their every-day employment, seemed astonishing, indeed! And yet, is it not precisely here, in our every-day employment, that most of us ought to look for the blessings of Providence? If this were to reserve its favors for the few fitted by character and circumstance for extraordinary work, how could all confide in it? Under such conditions, would there not be partiality? Do you think that there is any legitimate business, unholy or unclean, in the sight of him before whom all of us are equal? We are to do with our might[1] what our hands find

[1] Eccl. 9 : 10.

to do, not to try to find something else to do. When we are at our daily tasks, we need not be despondent because we can not be at our prayers; when we are journeying, because we can not be in our closets. Providence can send its benedictions equally to the custom house, or to the church; can grant its favors equally in the market, or in the monastery. Our worship of work will be rewarded just as amply if we be casting nets into the sea as if we were casting what others—our fathers, perhaps—have gained into the coffers of some shrine. Away with a view that lessens our conception of God as a Father of all, that we may conform it to a conception of him as a patron of the few! Away with a view of life that lessens our conception of the sacredness of ordinary labor by supposing it to be too far removed to feel the touch of him in whom "all[1] live and move and have their being." Let us toil on, friends, toil like these fishermen, all day, all night if need be, year in and year out, and, perhaps, in some monotonous way that seems to do no more, to gain no more, than to keep an aching body from a threatening grave. Let us wait on the Lord. We are where he has placed us. If so, let us believe that we are exactly where he intends to bless us.

Such a belief may be furthered in us, when we consider a third lesson that seems to be suggested by our subject. It is this,—that our ability to do good may depend not only on our using our own possessions, and on our attending to our own business, but

[1] Acts 17 : 28.

on our developing our own characters, and obtaining the sort of success that comes through this process. The lessons already considered have taught us what a man should use and where he should use it. Now let us answer the question why. Is it not because the good done in a Christian way is done through character,—through that, first, of the Christ, and, second, of his followers? Therefore good character, and the development of it in one, are essential to Christian influence. Not what a man uses, or where he works, but the spirit that he has, or is, is the important question, and small, humble occupations may show this as well as great and exalted ones. Goethe and Shakespeare are as consummate artists in their ballads and sonnets as in their tragedies and long plays. Look at this subject in the light of the Master's encounter with these fishermen. He was in need of earnest and intelligent workers to aid him in his mission of proclaiming truth and founding the church. Such characters he saw before him now; men who had energy, yet kept in check by patience; who had aspiration, yet balanced by perseverance. So he chose these. And, like him today, a wise man searching for assistants in a work involving any increase in emolument or dignity, will choose the men who, in an inferior situation, have evinced traits worthy of preferment. The less external inducements there may be in a man's position to stimulate his activity and diligence, the more fitted for advancement is he on account of having exhibited such traits, notwithstanding unfavorable

surroundings. The surest way for a man to get away from inferior work is to show himself a superior workman. Then the world will learn that the two things—the position and the person—do not fit; he will be taken elsewhere. However this may be as regards the present world, it must be the case as regards the next. Every mind must acknowledge the truth of the Master's illustration when he represents the Lord as saying to his servant,[1] "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." Is it not a consolation to think that in the government of God earthly conditions can not cramp the possibilities of the soul? The servant and the Master, the bond and the free, the child and the mature, the woman and the man, each in his or her appropriate sphere fulfilling duty in it without fretting impatiently or striving recklessly to encroach upon the sphere of another, without imperiling the peace of society or state by reformation or revolution, can stand an equal chance of receiving the plaudit "well done, thou good and faithful servant."

So, according to the passage of scripture which contains our text:—after we are told of the astonishment, not only of Peter, but of James and John, we are informed that Jesus said to Simon, "Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men," or, as reported in Mark 1:17, he said to all, "I will make you to become fishers of men." The narrative concludes by saying, "and when they had brought their

[1] Mat. 25 : 21.

ships to land, they forsook all and followed him." Their fishing boats and nets were not much to forsake, perhaps; but undoubtedly they were as acceptable to the Master as if they had been as costly as a modern battleship.

One can hardly emphasize too strongly this third lesson suggested by our subject. These fishermen were removed from a lower to a higher sphere of action for the very reason that, in the former, they had not discarded nor neglected their own tools or tasks. This is in accordance with a law exemplified everywhere in life. As a rule, promotions come because of what men have made and proved themselves to be through using what they have just where they are. The patience and skill cultivated in fishermen, through their being obliged to wait for occasions to avail themselves of opportunities, suggested to our Lord their fitness to become fishers of men,—their fitness to be those who should cast their nets into the sea of human iniquity, unconscious of what manner of men should be drawn to them, content to await the occasions and avail themselves of the opportunities furnished by Providence. And so every occupation in life has, in itself, the possibilities and preparations of advancement. It is the machinist who becomes the inventor; the soldier, the general; the accountant, the financier; the politician, the statesman; and in every material occupation there is the possibility of spiritual adaptation. These fishermen of our text were to become fishers of men.

All told, the lessons to be learned from our sub-

ject seem to be these,—that we should be willing to accept and to use those instrumentalities and situations that we find prepared for us, persevering in what we have to do now, and patient in awaiting what may be in store hereafter. Just where we are, in the household, in the school, in the market, in the warehouse, in the office, or in the church, we are to work out our own salvation, and, so far as possible, with our own, that of our neighbors.

With one more word let me close. It is well to notice the peculiar expression of the Master, "Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men." It is the humble soul who has learned of his own unworthiness and does not deem himself fitted for a more important place, but rather fears the contrary, that is often the first to receive promotion. The ambition awakened by the high opinion that one has of his own merits is a different thing from the aspiration awakened by the high opinion that one has of the amount of work that needs to be done in the world. Too high an opinion of one's self may be fatal to spiritual, if not to temporal, success. Usually with feelings awed by a consciousness of grave responsibility, the really great man bows to receive a great commission. Never, except with feelings awed by a consciousness of great unworthiness, does any man kneel to receive a spiritual advancement. The Master came to seek and to save that which was lost,—to call,[1] not the righteous—who deemed themselves such—but sinners to repentance. Would

[1] Mat. 9 : 13.

any of us stand high in his estimation? Would we be advanced to spheres of influence for eternity as well as for time? Let us acknowledge our own weakness and waywardness and wickedness, and let us contrast with them his patience and long suffering, his devotion and sacrifice. Then, when we feel like crying out with Simon, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, oh, Lord," then will be the time when we shall be fitted best to receive from him the words, "Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men." From henceforth we may be prepared, too, like these early disciples of his, to forsake all [1] and to follow him,—not through this world alone, but to that place where "eye [2] hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

[1] Luke 5: 11.

[2] 1 Cor. 2: 9.

XIV

THE SMALL FIDELITY THAT PRECEDES GREAT FULFILMENT

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." —Luke 16 : 10.

Does an impassable gulf separate the great and the small affairs of life? Many seem to think that it does. Every boy has heard of the eccentricity of genius. Few men have not listened to denunciations of the household accomplishments of intellectual women. It would be difficult to find a village barroom that does not, now and then, echo with laughter at reports of the petty foibles of those who—all things considered—may be the best characters of the neighborhood. When we hear of a person like the German historian Neander, coming from his lecture-room sad at heart because he has been struck, as he supposes, with sudden lameness, and convinced to the contrary by only the voice of his sister assuring him that he has walked home all the way through the street with one foot on the sidewalk and one in the gutter; when we hear of the unfortunate private traits in the home circle, of some of the most strenuous advocates for greater fidelity and purity there; when we notice the small jealousies and

meannesses of some of the most active in great schemes of benevolence,—at such times all of us may be tempted to surmise that, after all, he that is faithful in much is not by any means necessarily faithful also in that which is least. Yet our text affirms the contrary; and the subject is so important in its bearings upon certain features of life and influence that I have thought that it might not be unprofitable to call attention to it this morning.

"He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." Our reasons for surmising the contrary will be found unsubstantial, when we examine them. As applied to genius, for instance, it is true that men of great intellectual power often become so absorbed in the one department to which they have devoted themselves, as to become oblivious of the demands of any other department. It is related of Dante, for instance, that, on one occasion, setting out from home for the express purpose of witnessing a great public procession, he entered a bookstore and became so absorbed in a volume that happened to interest him that upon his return he asserted that he had neither seen nor heard the slightest signs of the procession, which, meantime, had passed almost immediately in front of him. Socrates is reported to have remained frequently an entire day and night in the same attitude, absorbed in meditation. Marini, the Italian poet, while revising his Adonis, became so callous to other considerations that one of his limbs is said to have remained burning for some time without giving him

any conscious sensation, while, more to our point, perhaps, Vaugelas, that most studiously polished writer of the French language, was so neglectful while living of his pecuniary obligations, that, as a last resort, when dying, he left his corpse to his surgeons for the benefit of his creditors. What of such instances? Do they disprove the statement of the text? Not necessarily. For the moment that we ask why it was that these men, and a thousand others who might be mentioned, manifested so little interest in matters of, at least, seeming importance, we shall find that we cannot explain the conditions by supposing that they were acting upon the principle of being faithless to the lesser in order to be faithful to the greater concerns of thought and action. With them, in fact, there was no question at all between lesser or greater—between degrees of concern—but between the kinds of matters upon which they should concern themselves.

That this was so will be evident the moment that we turn to consider their actions as manifested in their attention to the kinds of work to which they were devoted. Here we shall discover any disposition rather than a lack of fidelity to that which is least. On the contrary, the very abstraction of mind that has been noticed may be said to result from an opposite tendency. The organs of thought, like those of the hand, are abstracted, or, as we may say, contracted, as a rule, in order to concentrate upon that which is least. And you will find invariably that one difference between a great mind and

a small mind lies in the greater ability of the former to deal with—in the sense of mastering—minutiæ. It can penetrate into the deep and narrow recesses of nature, and extract its secrets. It can analyze the superficial generalities of appearances, and bring to light the hidden truth beneath them. Take Newton, or rather, perhaps, what is popularly said of him. Before his day, millions of apples had fallen to the ground, thousands of boys had blown soap-bubbles. It was only the penetration of his keen intellect that, piercing behind each phenomenon, saw the law of gravitation in the one, and the properties of light in the other. Take Lessing.—Wieland, Herder, Goethe and Schiller might have thought and written and been forgotten, had not this great critic had the discernment to sift from the works of the ancients and of the English those elements of excellence which his greater followers were led to recognize through his influence, and to develop and make prominent in their own works. Take Ruskin.—That great English painter, Turner, might have been thought worthy to receive scarcely a garret for a gallery, had not this sympathetic critic held the microscopic lens of his own subtle intellect to all the world, and bade them view the beauties of this painter's landscapes magnified. "A little thing," said an ancient philosopher, "gives perfection, altho perfection is not a little thing." When Pascal was writing his "Provincial Letters" he recommenced some of them seven or eight times, and was frequently twenty days occupied upon one.

After a labor of eleven years Virgil pronounced his Aeneid imperfect. Milton and Addison were both scrupulously careful about punctuation marks, and the number of corrections in the text of Tennyson's earlier poems since their first publication is said to equal almost the number of his pages. Probably, Homer would not have stood where he does in the history of poetry, had he not spent his entire mature life in traveling about the country, and repeating and, therefore, constantly and inevitably revising his Iliad and Odyssey. In fact, as every artist —but, unfortunately, not every critic—knows, it is largely in the subtle small points that a superior production differs from an inferior one. It is these that determine the quality of the work, that make it fine-grained, and cause the difference between the products of a master and of an amateur. The great logician never drops a single link that will strengthen the chain of his argument. The melody and rhythm of every line of the great poem pulse with the living presence of the artistic ideal that inspires the whole. The great painting can stand the test of the microscope. "Turner never passes his brush over one thousandth of an inch," says Ruskin, "without meaning." In every department of intellectual effort the statement of the text is confirmed. He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much.

And when we turn from intellectual to social results, we find abundant indications of the operation of the same law. So far as position in society is

determined by the riches that men have accumulated, it is determined according to this principle. Several years ago a poor boy from the country called upon a great banker in London and asked for a position. The boy was well recommended. But no; the bank had no vacancy. He was not needed. He left the office, and started to cross the little court that intervened between it and the main thoroughfare. Before he had reached that, the porter of the bank was sent to call him back. The great banker had changed his mind. A place in the bank would be made for the boy. Many years later, he had become not only a partner of the firm, but the Lord High Treasurer of the Kingdom. Then the one who had ordered his recall told him why he had done so. "As you were crossing the court," he said, "I saw you stoop down and pick up a pin, and place it carefully in your waistcoat. From that I knew that you were the sort of boy that our bank needed." So universally the men who can coin dollars are those who are careful about the dimes.

And more than this, when the money has been earned, those who obtain a broad social influence on account of having it are they who spend it in a manner faithfully to fulfil the lesser demands of life,—not those who give ostentatiously and greatly, so much as those who are also generous in secret and benevolent in little things. Look around you and see if this statement be not true. Who are the men successful in achieving those results on account

of which wealth is considered by most of us desirable? Who are those whom wealth really renders respected, influential and beloved? Are they not those who are faithful in spending it upon that which is least, whose money renders their own homes comfortable, their persons attractive, their conversation intelligent, and their residence in a community an undeniable advantage to the community?

Or, so far as high social position is determined by intelligence, who are they whose intelligence most promotes this? Are they simply the learned in some isolated department, or the brilliant?—No; rather those in whom knowledge and attainment are developed less eccentrically than comprehensively; who are, so to speak, less sharp than round. The very words that we use to designate them indicate this. We speak of their culture and refinement. Both terms imply intelligence pervading the whole intellectual and emotional nature; extending to its least as well as to its greatest manifestations. There is many a learned man and many a brilliant genius whose attainments and abilities, though recognized to their full extent, gain for their owner no respect or influence that is really worth while, simply because he himself is a selfish boor, touching humanity with only the harsh grip by means of which he wishes all to recognize that he has force. Such a man may imagine himself popular, but he is making the same mistake that we have all seen made by a very inexperienced boy who fancies that he is tickling another when he is merely torturing him.

Once more, so far as social standing is determined by character, this principle applies. What are the indications of character in any circumstances?—The great things of life, the great words or deeds? If some of us waited till we had produced these, we never should have any character at all. Those of you who have ever had an experience of complete enthusiastic devotion to some friend, if you can recall it, will bear me out in saying that they were no great things, but rather unobtrusive glances of the eye, unconscious tones of the voice, and accidental methods of expression that occasioned and continued, yes—and if such were our fate—in the end destroyed the friendship. Do we not all recognize that any deep-seated, constitutional, state of mind is discovered better when a man is off his guard than when he is on his guard? When he is off his guard, we catch a glimpse of the soul as it is; when he is on his guard, we see only what he chooses, as a result of calculation, to show us. So I say that it is the little instinctive, spontaneous, unpremeditated acts that show the tendencies of friendly or unfriendly feeling. Unless we be the merest brutes in our susceptibilities, the measure of our love to one is never determined by the magnificence of the presents that he lavishes upon us, or by the fulsomeness of his public flatteries. In the ordinary intercourse of every-day life, when judging of those about us, we all of us believe that "he that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much."

The transition from the influence of character in social relations to the whole realm of spiritual relations is very slight. For what determines one's spiritual relations but his character, that something pertaining to the soul that lies back of mere outward manifestations. Not what a man says or does merely,—but what a man is, habitually, in that unseen life which is supposed to be behind all words and deeds,—this determines his religious condition. A man has Christian faith to perfection in only the degree in which he is faith-full, i. e., full of faith in the Christ, in God, and in the Divine promises, plans and methods;—and, when he is faithful, this fact will evince itself, not merely in the great things, but also in the least things. When we visit a church, and listen to the Scripture and the voice of prayer or of exhortation, we are reminded from the outside of the obligations of religion, and when called to consider these, the fear of consequences to ourselves in the future, or of the disapprobation of others about us, whose eyes are upon us, may cause us to conform to religious requirements. But if we conform to them in the smaller matters, when there is nothing external to impel us to do so, then we evince far more decidedly that our external good deeds are a truthful expression of a constant internal condition of mind and spirit.

There are two thoughts that seem to be very forcibly suggested by the statement of the text. The first is that the principle of religion to which it gives expression takes us all in. It leaves no one out.

Some of us—and they are often the most conscientious and earnest of us—are inclined to be despondent, at times, because there seems to be so little in the world that is of importance, and, at the same time, of such a nature that we ourselves, by surrounding circumstances or by our acquirements or ability, are fitted to do it. We think occasionally, and think rightly, that we would gladly suffer persecution or imprisonment if, by this means, we could only exert the sort of influence that we feel to be worthy of our aspirations. We sometimes find it hard work to keep from envying others before whom, as contrasted with ourselves, the prospects of life seem to open so many more avenues than to us for acquiring individual good for themselves, and also good for their fellows. But our text, as I have said, takes us all in, just as fully as it does any one. "He that is faithful in that which is least,"—this is the test; and there is no circumstance, acquirement or ability in life so small and limited that it cannot be included in what is meant by this word least.

The other thought suggested by the text is this, that the principle of religion to which it gives expression not only takes us all in, but it takes in all of us, i. e., all that there is of ourselves, all the departments of our being—the whole man. Making a success of one's life—by which I mean producing a result of perfect manhood—is very much like making a statue. The sculptor first models his clay so as to represent the general outlines; then he puts on the finishing touches, and, tho the clay-model of

the statue may remain apparently completed for years—years in which he may be working upon many other figures—he hardly ever looks at it without feeling an inclination to change this feature, or that feature, and thus to make it a little more satisfactory. So with a man when trying to mold an ideal character. He is first interested in the general outlines; and these, in all men, as we know, are very much alike. There are certain traits which, as a rule, all Christians possess. But these do not suffice. As long as a man lives he feels that other minuter features must be changed before the whole can be perfect. Therefore, you see how interesting life can become and how its interest need never die out. Everyone can become an artist, his model of manhood the great Master; the material upon which he works, himself; and those whom his product inspires, the world, for the sake of which the Master came, and lived and died.

It is evident, therefore, that those hold a wrong theory who suppose that a man can get religion, and get it perfectly—he can begin to get it, of course—in a few moments. If we could get it thus, what would be the use of our continuing to live on the earth? What should we be able to gain from our experience here? We ought to have a theory adjusted to all the demands of human conditions. When we recognize this fact, and in the degree in which we do it, we shall be prepared to realize how much we need to apply our religion to the small duties of every-day life. It will not do, as some of

us seem to indicate by our practise, to apply it to only greater matters. It is not every one of us who is called upon to slay the adversary in the shape of some roaring lion. If it were so, every one, perhaps, would feel the need of assistance from the Spirit that alone can strengthen us so as to make what religion we have triumphant. Some of us are battling all our lives with the smallest obstacles. We can crush a million gnats in our hands at once, perhaps—but each of them may sting. How often can the least of our household and business cares vex and annoy and startle us out of all decorum and circumspection? And if the least things try us and tempt us into wrong, then in these, by far the most ordinary occurrences of life, we need the assistance of the Spirit that we may resist and overcome.

But think, friends, when we do call down the aid of the Spirit, and become conscious of his assistance in these least things, how the very fact that he is present in them, and that we feel his presence in them, transfuses with a new interest the whole universe of agencies and objects. If present in these least, how much more apparently so in the greater? Recognize the seeds of divine influence in the smallest objects, in the minutest germs that can be filtered between any of the atoms of the sod or stone on which we tread, and how much more reason have we to recognize it when we think of its matured developments, springing above the heavens,—the stars, their clustered fruit, and paradise amid their

branches. And then, when thought returns to earth, and finds in its own home a miniature of all God's universe, and, in every smallest duty, the fulfilment of a divine obligation, then, indeed, it seems to me that there may be experience of a life worth living, —a life to outward appearance the same, perhaps, as that of many another man; but, to the inward senses of one whose affections have been set on things above[1] and not on things of the earth, a life that is hid[2] with Christ in God,—a life in which old things[3] have passed away and all things have become new; and, in the fulness of the enthusiasm that has dedicated self and all its possessions to that higher influence that we call the Spirit of God, the soul may perceive at last that God indeed can be, and is, in every thing. Thus, he that is faithful in that which is least, so far as human actions can do so, evinces that he is the child of God and a joint heir[4] with Christ of that inheritance which is the greatest possible.

[1] Col. 3 : 2. [2] Col. 3 : 3. [3] 2 Cor. 5 : 17. [4] Rom. 8 : 17.

XV

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF UNCONSCIOUS AND PRIVATE INFLUENCE

"Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"—2 Kings 2 : 14.

This was a question asked by Elisha, one of the younger prophets of Israel, apparently connected with the Israelitish School of Prophets at Gilgal. Only a short time before, he had come from that place with Elijah, the most famous prophet of the Kingdom; and, altho Elijah three times had turned to him, saying, "Tarry here, I pray thee," Elisha, enthusiastic in his attachment to his Master, or influenced by some premonition, had replied, "As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." So they had journeyed on together. When they had come to the Jordan, Elijah, according to the story—the beautiful moral of which would alone justify its use in the literature of any nation—smiting the waters with his mantle, had caused them to divide hither and thither, so that the two went over on dry ground. A little further on, Elijah had said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I shall be taken away"; and Elisha had answered, "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy

spirit be upon me''; that is, not double as much as Elijah himself had, but double as much as others following Elijah should have. According to the Jewish laws, a double portion of an equal distribution of the father's goods among all the family fell to the eldest son,[1] the heir, the successor to the family titles. So Elisha asked that he might become the successor of Elijah as the leader of the prophets of his country: ''I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.'' And Elijah said, ''Thou hast asked a hard thing, nevertheless, if thou see me, when I am taken from thee, it shall be so with thee.'' ''Then it came to pass,'' to quote from the story again, that, ''as they still went on and talked, behold there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven; and Elisha saw it, and he cried, 'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!' '' After that, Elisha took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the banks of the Jordan. And with the mantle of Elijah, he smote the waters as Elijah had done before him, and said, ''Where is the Lord God of Elijah?'' And when he also had smitten the waters, they again parted, hither and thither, and Elisha went over.

Consciously, Elisha may have asked this question for the first time now; but how many times before do you suppose that he had asked it unconsciously?; asked it, perhaps, as, with admiration, he had heard

[1] Deut. 21 : 17.

of the bravery with which the prophet Elijah had confronted[1] the profligate and haughty king of the country, Ahab; asked it, as he had trembled at the tale of the fate of the four hundred and fifty[1] prophets of Baal, slain for their opposition to Jehovah; asked it, as, with reverence, he had listened to his Master at the School of Prophets at Gilgal; asked it as he had followed that Master, with only a vague sense of what was to come, across the Jordan and onward toward the place where he had been blest with a last glimpse of his form ascending through the skies. Where is the Lord God of Elijah? —had not to discover this become the foremost motive in all his thinking? Because Elijah was great and good, had he not inferred that therefore the God whom he represented was great and good? Through the works and ways of Elijah had he not been led to seek that he might find the God who had been represented through them? And now, when he had reached the first place in the pathway of life where he needed a manifestation of the power of this God, was it wonderful that he should have uttered consciously that which, tho unconsciously perhaps, had become the fundamental question of his life,—"where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

And he, friends, is not the only person who has asked such a question, nor is Elijah the only man of God in connection with whom it has been asked. Everywhere it is the individual nearest us that conveys to us our impression of the person, human or

[1] 1 Kings 18 : 1-40.

divine, with whom he is associated, and of whom he stands the representative. Poor human beings, at our noblest, weak and ignorant, we have no power with which to resist the effects of our surroundings, no eye with which to look beyond our sphere. At best, we are the creatures of circumstance, weak and pliant and shaped according to the mold in which we fall. We think, perhaps, that we believe in purity and love. We do so only in so far as our experience has clasped the hand and heard the voice of purity and loveliness. The fraudulent man's companion at our side, with no worse a soul than ours, may think that all humanity are fraudulent. The miser's may believe that all are miserly.

And what the man with whom we meet is to the character of individuals, that is he, too, to the character of the nation to which he belongs. In my youth the few Italians of whom I had chanced to hear were operatic singers, the few Frenchmen, dancing teachers. Forthwith, all of Italy, to my imagination, was like a grove at morning vocal with the trills of music, and all of France trembled to the tread of dancers. To-day, to the minds of some of us, because a few English writers with whom we are acquainted oppose Republicanism, and a few German poets and philosophers applaud it, the English character, notwithstanding its Brights and Ruskins, seems wedded to aristocracy; and the German character, notwithstanding its Williams and Bismarks, to liberalism. Far away, upon the western shores of the Pacific, our Anglo-Saxon missionaries

are laboring hard to inculcate the principles and to develop the practises of the Christ. But much of their labor is ineffective because, nearer to the people whom they address than the missionary, and more constantly their companion, stand the Anglo-Saxon sailor and trader, by word and deed profaning the name and libeling the character of that form of civilization which men term Christian.

For, as I have intimated, this law of representation extends beyond that of personal and national to religious character. Christianity is to all of us what the majority of christians with whom we come in contact represent it to be. Examine your own experience, and tell me if it be not so. You had a religious father and mother once, perhaps. In the midst of trouble and loss, do you never recall how their strong faith enabled them to withstand and survive like experiences? You had some religious friend in time past, it may be. In the presence of trial or temptation, do you never recall how his devoted love burned with so bright a flame as to consume the one and to make dim the allurements of the other? Amidst the memories of loving homes and the associations of upright companionship, do you never cry in your desire for kindness and integrity: "Where is the Lord God of the man of God?"

I have said that a religious man represents to the world the character of his religion. If so, he represents, as well, that which our text assumes, the God who is the source of his religion. And certainly

this view accords with fact as well as with scripture; —with fact, because among all nations, the ideal of God possessed by the common people never has exceeded the perfection which they have had reason to infer in the Deity, inasmuch as they have witnessed something similar in the man made in his image? What were the characteristics of the warriors, philosophers or poets who, as representatives of manhood, ranked highest among the Greeks? Find that out, then study Greek mythology, and you will find the same characteristics assigned to their gods. The ideal sources of power among the ancient Romans were the commanders, who enforced their wills with the lances of the soldier and the chains of the slave. The deities whom they worshiped had the same characteristics. The ideal sovereigns among the ancient Germans slew their neighbors brutally, then pledged each other's health in liquor, drunk from their enemies' skulls. This, too, was the employment of their gods.

And the view that has been presented accords, as well, with scripture. Who, to the ancient Jews, was Jehovah himself?—who, but the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, of Moses and David, as well as the Lord God, too, of Elijah? And, friends, who to us, to-day, in this Christian dispensation, is this same Sovereign but the God and father of our Lord, Jesus Christ? How do we know of the divine Spirit bending attentively to hear and answer and bless, when we feel moved to confess our sins and plead for pardon, and pledge ourselves to renewed devo-

tion, except as our inspired Master, that greater prophet, in his life of self-denial and in his death of sacrifice, has represented to us the love and mercy of the deity? Not only then to the mourning man who bore that mantle to the Jordan, but to every one of us when we have need to invoke the aid of him in whom we live and move and have our being, the question comes, in view of either Christianity or the Christ who represents the unseen attributes of him who ever must be veiled from mortal vision, where is the Lord God of the man of God? This was the first thought of Elisha now; and probably throughout his whole life, blest with prophetic influence and incident as marvelous as those that rendered so remarkable the career of his predecessor, this thought was his constant inspiration.

And notice, friends, how of all this profound and continued effect of his deeds and character upon his pupil, Elijah himself, during his lifetime, must have been unaware; and let us derive from it a lesson concerning unconscious influence. During his whole ministry Elijah had battled against the corruption of the sovereigns of Israel and the polluting practises of the worshippers of Baal. But at his death a corrupt King still sat upon the throne of Israel; and tho seven thousand men had not bowed their knees to Baal,[1] they were few in comparison with the tens of thousands in the land who had. Despite all his labors, had the vision of Elijah regarded only the good that he was conscious of hav-

[1] 1 Kings 19 : 18.

ing achieved, he would have left the world a disappointed and despondent man. And yet, for all that, the scepter of righteousness that he had swayed had not departed from Israel; and Israel was the better that it had passed through his brave grasp. He may have valued his discarded life as little as that mantle left behind him, faded by the storms and tattered by the winds, the sole companion of so many dangerous flights and lonely slumbers. What of that? Elisha caught the mantle. He prized it like a robe that he might have wrested from an angel; and he caught with it the spirit of Elijah too, and went back to his countrymen invested as the prince of all her prophets. And so Elijah's mission was perfected, when his worldly eyes could recognize it not. The line of prophets, the succession of the preachers of the truth, remained unbroken, not because the power of wicked kings and priests had been wholly destroyed, as, in his younger years, he had prayed and hoped might be the case;—no, but because the prophets in the School of Gilgal had beheld that earnest face and reverent eye on which he never had bestowed a thought; because Elisha now held in his hand that outer garment that had been thrown away. And you and me, friends, is there not a lesson here for us? We all are preachers in our little way; and many of us talk and talk and talk, and often not an echo comes back to assure our souls that any strength even of empty sound has left them. Notwithstanding this, who knows?—the wife's form bent in silent prayer, the husband's

anxious face, the mother's kiss, the comrade's blush —God knows—we yet may have done some little good unconsciously. We all of us are teachers in our little way; and, like Elijah, coming from the School of Gilgal, only one—perhaps not even one—of those that we would influence may follow in the course where we would lead. What then?—Perhaps some time the careworn face that seems just ready for the other world, the old robe that we would have thrown aside long ago could we have had our own way, may yet stir a recollection or inspire a prayer that shall do something.

And this influence thus exerted by Elijah may teach us not alone a lesson concerning unconscious influence, but also a lesson concerning private influence. Apparently no continued success had attended the appearance of the prophet at the Court of the Kings, or amid the multitudes who witnessed the destruction of the priests of Baal. Everything of this sort in his life that had seemed to promise well, even tho it may have ended with a triumph for Jehovah, had been followed by his own proscription, flight and persecution. He knew of the seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal, not because he himself had come in contact with them, crowding anxious to accord him grateful thanks for his endeavors to uphold the truth; he knew of these alone when, weary and downhearted in the desert, that Sovereign Source of life which was not in the wind or the earthquake or the fire, but in the still small voice, had revealed it to him for his consola-

tion[1] and encouragement. And now, when passing over Jordan, it was less the wisdom, doubtless concentrated in his parting words to all the assembled prophets of the School of Gilgal; less this that had lingered with Elisha, than the vision of the mantle moved to separate the waters, where these two were journeying.

And if such things were true of him, friends, were similar things not true of Jesus also? Where was his greatest triumph?—when he rode on toward Jerusalem, amidst the swaying palms and plaudits of the thousands crying, "Hosannah to the Son of David?"[2]—when he spake as one who had authority,[3] confuting Scribes and Pharisees, who dared not[4] lay hold on him because they feared the people? Not so; but when he was alone with the twelve in the upper chamber,[5] when he was with the three in the garden,[6] when he went alone[7] to crucifixion, when he hung, a silent, hooted form,[8] upon the cross.

And so with you and me, friends,—what if, at some time, like to Elijah, we could have access to the court circles of all wealth and power? What if the multitude should crowd to welcome us, and half the world stand wondering at the triumph of our undertaking? After all, our real audience might be far off from these, amid the seven thousand still unseen; and who might have been affected just as largely without the superficial spectacle of multitudes gathered to

[1] 1 Kings 19 : 11-18. [2] Mat. 21 : 7-9. [3] Mat. 7 : 28, 29.
[4] Mark 12 : 12. [5] Luke 22 : 14. [6] Mark 14 : 33.
[7] Mat. 26 : 56. [8] Mat. 27 : 39-43.

satisfy merely our vanity. After all, our most enduring influence may lie in some slight gesture of our hand as we walk along some lonely road with only one companion.

And if these things be so, if the profoundest influence of our lives may be unconscious and private, what manner of persons ought we to be? We see, in the first place, the necessity, each in his own individual way as he conceives of it, of entire consecration to that which is highest and noblest. If not alone our words but also our deeds, our faces and our frames, our smiles and our sighs, our gestures and our gaits, our manners and our mantles, be, unconsciously to ourselves, the representatives of the attributes of that God whom we profess to reverence, of that Christ by whose name we call ourselves, is it a matter of little moment what shall be even the wording of our compliment, or the tone of our greeting? No half way religion, friends, merely for Sundays or at public worship—nothing but whole-hearted service during all the week days, during all our play as well as work, will rescue us from an unconscious and private influence for evil.

Then, again, in the second place, we see the necessity of early consecration. All methods that are spiritual are apt to influence the inner motives first; the outer actions afterwards. As a rule, it takes time, and a long time often, for the love within the soul to mold the external bearing of the man into full conformity with itself. Better begin early in

life, then, before habits become fixed, and when it is easy to form new ones.

Once more, in the third place, we see the necessity of continual reconsecration; of consecration keeping pace through all our lives with the increase of our knowledge and the broadening of our interests. We are Christians when we begin to follow the Christ, no matter with how faltering faith, how feeble love, how tottering footsteps. But, remember, not until we reach the standard of our Lord himself, "till we all come[1] in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," shall our unconscious and private influence be all that it should be. Not until then shall we cease, in some material matters, to misrepresent the character of the Christian, and need to plead the mercy of God because we mock him with our imperfect service. Remember, that, aside from what can be gathered from sources far less influential, our friends and the world about us can never reach a higher standard of life than we and our friends and the world about us set for one another.

Let us find fault with others if we must, then, friends; but first let us be certain that we ought not to find fault with ourselves for doing all that we can to place or to keep others where they are. The surest way in which to reason our neighbors into a right course of action is by setting for them an example of doing and being right. In every deed,

[1] Eph. 4 : 13.

word, movement of our lives, our neighbor, friend, consort, child, has his eyes upon us. If he ever shall be saved for this world or for the next, it may be because he shall take up some method or mantle, some external, little valued, discarded covering of some soul about him, and, in imitation, smite the waters that obstruct a path to usefulness and duty, questioning in his soul, like the prophet in our text: "Where is the Lord God of the man of God?"

XVI

A KIND HEART, THE CONDITION OF A COURAGEOUS LIFE

"Then Paul answered, 'What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.'"—Acts 21 : 13.

Genuine susceptibility is the condition of all true courage. If Paul, in answer to the Christians of Cesarea who besought him not to go up to Jerusalem, in view of the dangers which threatened him there, had not had the disposition to say, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart," he scarcely could have had the resolution to add, "For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

It is an old saying that barking dogs do not bite; and no one knows much of the world who is not aware that an essentially coarse and brutal character, a braggart boastful chiefly of his independence of the wishes or sympathy of others, is incapacitated by his very nature for deeds involving the grandest heroism. A human, like an ocean vessel, has not balance to carry the heaviest sail and to fly the highest standard, unless that which is beneath the surface, hidden from sight, has corre-

sponding depth. The first breath of genuine opposition is apt to topple over all the vaunted valor of a man without a heart. One who does not feel for others, cannot fight for them; who does not think for others cannot lead them; who does not live for others, cannot, except to himself alone, appear to have a life that is worth the living. So true is this, that it will be found, I think, upon examination, that the majority of men who have exhibited great powers in their maturity, have been remarkable in youth largely for that sensitiveness which is always an indication of a susceptible temperament. They have often been shrinking in their dispositions, and quick to take offense. They frequently have become more or less suspicious of others, and have been given to loneliness and introspection, if not, as in the case of Abraham Lincoln, to seasons of morbidness and misanthropy. At the same time, unfortunate as such developments are in themselves, the very cause of them has often proved their cure. That delicacy of organization that makes one's nature close up like the leaves of a sensitive plant at the harsh touch of a hostile, or of merely an unappreciative phrase or action, prepares him to consider carefully the tendency of the words and deeds with which he himself meets others;—to study faithfully the human nature everywhere about him, so that he may not, on his part, be a source of the same painful sense of a lack of sympathy that he himself has so often experienced. But to study human nature and to control one's action so as to appeal to it,—

what is this but to think and to live for others? And, so far as one's aim in doing this is noble, what is this but to be in the highest sense as wise as he is useful—in short, to possess those qualities which, when the emergency arises, shall unfold into the most discriminating and disinterested heroism?

The same truth with reference to the fundamental necessity of susceptibility is shown, too, in the fact that, where it seems to be lacking by nature, it is only after it has been aroused through some external agency that the person in whom it manifests itself becomes capable of the most exalted modes of life. When the young man, whose heedless indifference or inconsiderate selfishness has caused the community generally to regard him as a well-nigh worthless encumbrance upon society, is once brought into relations where there are others—members of his own family, perhaps, a widowed mother, a fatherless sister, a wife or children—to support, or educate, or influence by precept or example,—then it is marvelous, at times, to note the change that comes over him, to see how gentle and considerate and self-abnegating his new responsibilities have made him. Or take one in the political world who, when out of office, has been, in the worst sense, a radical, always ready to denounce and criticize with harsh and unrelenting severity every measure of the opposition; who has never seemed to be able to appreciate an opponent's position, never had a kind word to say even of an opponent's intention;—

take him and place him in authority, let him feel what it is to be denounced and criticized, let him experience something of the practical difficulty of appeasing all the factions of a party, of conciliating rivals and of compromising plans, and in the end of proposing measures that shall satisfy a reasonable proportion of the people;—and by and by most likely you will find him as appreciative, as considerate and as patient as the most conservative. And I think that you will agree with me that only after the change has taken place in him will he be prepared to do for his country that which the radicals, Lincoln, Chase and Seward, did for our own country at the time of our Civil War.

I have used these illustrations in order to remind you of that of which we all need to be reminded so frequently, namely, that there is no departure from universal principles in the characteristics that, according to Christianity, are needed in order to produce the noblest specimens of manhood. The Christian system is based upon the theory of human susceptibility as the foundation of all worthy endeavor; and because it is so based, its appeals are addrest primarily to the heart. A Christian, whatever may be his preliminary experience, is a man who has had spiritual truth—i. e., the truth concerning God—so presented to him that, at length, he has come to be in love with the source of that truth—i. e., with God; or, rather, as he is termed a Christian, one might say in love with the character of God as manifested in the Christ. As the Apostle John expresses

it, "every one[1] that loveth is born of God"; and "every one that loveth him that begat, loveth[2] him also," referring to the Christ, "that is begotten of him." The Christian life introduces a man into family relations not only with God, but with all those who are of the household of God. And the same effect that the family relations and responsibilities of earth may have upon the heedlessness and inconsiderateness of youth, the realization of these higher relations and responsibilities may have upon the indifference and selfishness of him who has been merely of the world. Besides this, the Christian life introduces a man into the Kingdom of God, and gives him authority to act not only as a citizen but as a representative on earth of that Kingdom. And this, again, has a tendency to impart to him all those patriotic qualities, culminating at times in heroic courage, which are apt to be developed by official position under a human government.

These are the thoughts that seem first suggested in connection with the passage chosen for my text. While on his way to Jerusalem and tarrying for a few days in Cesarea, we are told that "there came down from Judea a certain prophet named Agabus. And when he had come, he took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet and said: 'Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" And when, adds the writer of the book, who was accompanying

[1] 1 Jno. 4 : 7. [2] 1 Jno. 5 : 1.

Paul, we heard these things, both we and they of the place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart?" Here we have susceptibility —a susceptibility remarkable—is it not?—in the character of one who, not many years before this, had been a hard, unrelenting persecutor? His sympathizing with the purposes of the Great Master had caused him to become appreciative of all human conditions and tender to their influence:—"What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart?" But this was not all. His susceptibility was so great that it could not be content to regard merely the temporary tears of those immediately surrounding him. It embraced a consideration of the permanent interests both of them and of all other Christians, as well as of the Master, of whom all were followers. "For I am ready," he added, "not to be bound only, but also to die, at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, "The will of God be done,"—an expression which, I think, evinces very clearly that which always is the legitimate effect upon others of a combination of such qualities as he had manifested.

As already intimated, these developments in the character of the Apostle are not isolated examples of the influence of the Christian system. Every man whose heart has really been given to the Master manifests them in a greater or less degree. Every nation or country that has been blest by the

presence of Christian churches exhibits them. Christianity is a life of love, and, wherever it is found, there life will grow more loving. Like the stream that rises from its source and pours down through the valley, making fertile many a plain and tracked throughout its course by the freshness and the verdure, by the flowering and the fruitage of all the surrounding earth, so Christianity within the soul is a well of water springing up to everlasting life, purifying one's emotions of base suggestions, and one's thoughts of selfish bias, and flowing forth through word and deed to exert a genializing influence on those by whom he is surrounded; tracked throughout its course by increasing indications of refinement and benevolence, of civilization and enfranchizement, by the home and the asylum, by the school and the hall of legislation. And not only so, but Christianity is, as well, a life of duty, of duty capable of achievements high beyond the conception of a soul that has not in itself a corresponding depth of love. Like the sun that, with a glow of promise in the east, rises in the morning, burning through the mists and brightening every shade, till all the thickest underbrush becomes illumined, and the flower in the deepest valley radiant to reflect its own appropriate coloring; so the Christian sense of obligation coming to consciousness with the first faint halo that suggests the dawning of the Sun of Righteousness, moves outward through words and deeds, enlightening ignorance and making error transparent, till every subtlest sophistry of the

wrong becomes as visible as downright falsehood, and the slightest beauty of the right in the most hidden places invites to admiration of the glory of the Christ-like that it manifests in miniature. It does not stop with homes, asylums, schools and halls of legislation. In every hour of life, wherever it may find a homeless wanderer or a needy sufferer, a doubting mind or a despondent spirit, it tells the Christian that the Lord has called upon him not alone for corporate reforms, but for individual self-denial that never can accomplish all that it should until the world is perfect; and, until then, there is no microscopic test of obligation that is minute enough to satisfy the soul endeavoring to observe the extent of the injunction, "Bear[1] ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ."

In this view of the Christian life it seems to me, in the first place, that there is much to afford us satisfaction, notwithstanding the smallness of our own achievements. The essence of religion is so simple,—nothing more than love, love that is the result of the confidence or faith that we have in God on account of what he has shown himself to be in the revelation of the one willing to suffer and to die that we might live, and be blest in the life that we live. As the apostle Paul expresses it, "in Jesus Christ neither circumcision[2] availeth anything nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." No need of any questioning or studying with reference to any theories of theology or of cere-

[1] Gal. 6 : 2. [2] Gal. 5 : 6.

monial rites! No absolute need of this!—altho much information may come from it. The only essential question is with reference to our love. To have this, to love God, to love Christ, to love our fellowmen so as to give one's self to them; to dedicate all that one has or is to their service,—this is all that is essential. This love within the soul is all that any one needs in addition to his human nature. The good seed of God sown in the soil of God's preparing, it must spring up. It is itself the earnest of the leaf and flower and fruit and shelter of the full grown tree. The pure fountain of God in God's own place, it must flow forth to vivify and to cheer, to make all about it an Eden and a delight,—only love that a child can feel and understand and express. And, yet, an element so mighty that God himself, altho it is the very essence of his being, can never express the whole of it; nay, tho infinite space be his scroll, the stars the letters through which we trace his handwriting, and eternity the duration of his labor.

And herein while I find a certain amount of satisfaction, notwithstanding our small achievements, I find at the same time a stimulus to the greatest endeavor. In fact, no use in my finding it. Love itself is its own stimulus. You who have tried to live in accordance with its promptings know this. You know that, altho it is a consolation to feel that love is enough. this fact is not inconsistent with the stimulus that impells you constantly to make exertion because you feel that love can never do

enough for that on which its affections have been centered. You know that the peace of Christian consciousness is not inconsistent with the activity of Christian effort. You can apprehend how God can be infinite repose at the center of the universe while all things about him are eternally revolving; and this, because you yourselves, at times, when lifted near to Him through the love that you experience, feel that you are lifted near to the center of all things where is rest, and yet, influenced by which, all is movement. You know that Christian love but serves your

> "mind to wake
> As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake
> The center moved, a circle straight succeeds,
> Another still, and still another speeds,
> Friend, parent, neighbour first it will embrace,
> His country next, and next all human race."[1]

You feel that your soul is impelled to press on from one sphere of obligation to another, each one like the ripples of the lake becoming more and more minute; yet each embracing more and more of that which is infinite and eternal. This must be—it is not possible that it should not be—the case, if you have indeed been "strengthened[2] with might by His spirit in the inner man"; if you constantly strive "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height and to know the

[1] Pope's Essay on Man, IV. [2] Eph. 3 : 16-19.

love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

We have all read of instances, perhaps we have seen them, in which a mother, with but little strength of mind or of body, has been suddenly aroused to thought and action upon seeing the child that she loves floating off upon a cake of ice in a flooded river, or disappearing amid the smoke of a burning building. Then we have heard of the activity that suddenly has evinced itself in her intellect, of the quickness of intuition, of the acuteness of memory, of the sagacity of forethought, of the ingenuity of invention; and, then, of the marvelous self-sacrifice and superhuman strength that she has manifested in the execution of her plans,—all this high achievement of mind and body the result of love! Now make that love a constant possession, and the emergency a constant condition—for the cause of right is always in danger—and you begin to realize what the Christian life can do for manhood. It cultivates susceptibility; yes. But it does not stop with this. It is not a life for women and children alone, as some men seem to think. It will take more than a mere man to realize in his own experience all that it can do for the intellect and the will. There is no philosophy that is deep enough for it. There is no courage that is bold enough. There is no resolution that is firm enough. It may say what mean ye to weep and to break mine heart?—but it can also say, "for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Here are the two extremes, love and duty. Here is full orbed manhood. If one would have that which shall make him more than weak; if he would have that which shall make him more than strong; if those of society would have that in which to confide in the woe demanding sympathy; if those of the state would have that on which to rely in the danger demanding heroism, let them look to Christianity—let them look to men like the apostle Paul. The characteristics possessed by these can save and bless on earth, no less than in heaven, Godliness being profitable[1] unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

[1] 1 Tim. 4 : 8.

XVII

THE WORLDLY INHERITANCE OF THE UNWORLDLY MIND

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."—Mat. 5 : 5.

As in the case of all truly good men, the great Master's own life furnished always the best commentary upon his teachings. To the multitudes upon the mount who listened to the words of our text there could have seemed no more striking example of meekness than that afforded by the mild face and modest bearing of the speaker who addressed them. The carpenter's son, reared without experience of luxury, and ordained to preach without pomp of ceremony, his only authority lay in the truth that he uttered, his only attractiveness in the courteous bearing and kindly deeds with which he had confirmed this truth. Behind him, as he spoke, appeared no altar rich in gems; beyond, no chancel, set with marbles. About him was the common meeting place for all humanity;—no tiling in the aisles save that which had been laid there by the hands that framed all nature: no carpet at his feet save that on which were spread flowers freely welcoming the ownership of every living creature. Above, there was no dome except the pure expanse of heaven,—

God's own, resting against the blue horizon only,—the narrowest walls that ever he prescribed for limits of the true church militant. Even when the labors of the day were done and night came on, tho the foxes[1] had their holes, and the birds of the air their nests, he had not where to lay his head. During a few months, it is true, the multitudes, healed of their diseases, and welcomed in their wretchedness, had flocked to him with grateful eyes and heedful ears. But, close upon the heels of the multitudes, suspicious of the influence that drew them, came their rulers. Later in his ministry, tho often he would fain have gained a little rest upon the fields where he had met the people, the officers of law were there, the agents of his enemies; and he was forced to spend the weary night in flight. For all this, too, so far as human eyes could see, appeared no compensation. Every day until his last, the great men of the land reviled, pursued, and persecuted him. For months before his death, the shadow of a cruel crucifixion loomed before him; and no word of his revealed that he had even hoped that it might be averted. On the contrary, he prophesied that it should take place[2] even as it did. He started for Jerusalem, and sought the garden of Gethsemane, in his own emphatic language, because "his hour[3] was come." As Isaiah years before had said of such a character, "He was despised[4] and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was oppressed and he was afflicted,

[1] Mat. 8 : 20. [2] Mark 8 : 31. [3] Jno. 13 : 1. [4] Is. 53 : 3, 7.

yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." From the humble beginning to the humiliating end of his ministry, uttering never a complaint, suggestive of rebellion, moving never a muscle in order to ward off the sufferings to which he was heir, his whole life was one continued exemplification of that inward resignation of spirit, and outward acquiescence in the lot assigned by Providence, with which we are accustomed to associate the idea of meekness.

But in his case, connected with his own life, were there any facts illustrative of the truth of the prophecy, "the meek shall inherit the earth"? Rather, might we not ask, were there any facts that were not illustrative of its truth? Why was it that the common people flocked to him, and heard him gladly?[1] Why was it, for so long a time, that the rulers, anxious to arrest him,[2] dared not lay hold on him because they feared the people? Why was it that, immediately after his death, his disciples began to be numbered by thousands and tens of thousands? Why is it that, to-day, wherever faith in him has been acknowledged, Christianity is the system, and Christian the name, in connection with which are associated all the most powerful as well as beneficial agencies that exert influence over nations or individuals?

Ask any unprejudiced person, what is put forth in the New Testament as the essence of Christian

[1] Mark 12 : 37. [2] Mark 12 : 12.

doctrine, what is the spirit of Christian life? Is it not love, and a life according to principles of love? Is not the origin of the whole of it the fact that, "even as Christ [1] pleased not himself," but freely gave himself "a ransom [2] for all," so others of the race, drawn into sympathy with the same life, are trying to "bear [3] one another's burdens, and so to fulfil the law of Christ"?—And would there have been any attempt on the part of his earlier or of his later disciples to do this, if it had not been for the meekness that always characterized his own bearing? Was it not this that, in the midst of revilings and persecutions and even crucifixion itself, enabled him always to manifest that, no matter what others might do to him, love was his uppermost characteristic? So far then as Christianity has taken possession of the earth, so far as it is the most powerful agency that overrules human actions and progress —and who doubts that it now is or ultimately shall become such?—this inheritance of the earth that has fallen to its lot is due, humanly speaking, mainly to the meekness that its founder was enabled to manifest.

Such seems to be the fact with reference to the Master himself; and it is natural to infer that what was true of him will be true of his followers. In proportion as they manifest through the meekness of their bearing that they seek not their own good but that of others, in this proportion will they begin to influence others for good. That which ren-

[1] Rom. 15 : 3. [2] 1 Tim. 2 : 6. [3] Gal. 6 : 2.

dered Jesus powerful to possess himself of the lives and services of the inhabitants of the earth will render his disciples powerful to do the same. This much a merely superficial, general consideration of the text might teach us. But let us look into the subject more carefully.

"The meek shall inherit the earth." In the case of our Lord, as the church maintains, he was to inherit the earth—i. e., to own its products and its kingdoms,—first, spiritually, by ruling over the hearts of men, who should dedicate themselves and their possessions to his service; and second, literally, by causing the influence exerted upon their hearts—the love awakened therein—to come gradually to have an effect upon their outward lives. Owing to this effect, extending from individuals to communities, by and by, the kingdoms of the earth should all become literally, externally, materially, the Kingdoms[1] of our Lord and of his Christ.

In the case of Jesus, then, the church believes that the statement of the text was to be evinced and, partially, has been evinced to be true, first, spiritually, and, second, materially. A similar fact might be affirmed of many other statements in the Scriptures, and, as much for the right interpretation of these others as of the one before us, it is important for us to ascertain, if possible, how the truth can be made to seem truth in each case, and in such a way that we ourselves shall recognize it for what it is. Anything that is true merely spiritually must be

[1] Rev. 11 : 15.

made to seem so, of course, to our spirits. Anything, on the contrary, that is literally, i. e., materially true, must be made to seem so to that which is material in us,—to our senses. To express this differently, we become conscious of truth recognized by our spirits, only as it appears to us in the unseen region of thought,—only as it exists for us in the realm of ideas. Our consciousness concerning it is simply this,—we have an idea, a belief, a conviction in connection with it. On the other hand, of that which is recognized through the senses, we have more than this,—we have an actual perception.

So far then as our Lord was conscious of the fulfilment of this text, it was fulfilled for him first ideally, and, second, really; and our own consciousness of its fulfilment in our own case must be in accordance with the same order. How then did the meekness of Jesus enable him to be conscious of possessing the world ideally? And how could a meek spirit in you and me enable us to do the same? As intimated a moment ago, that which we term meekness is the disposition of soul which causes one's spirit and bearing to be resigned and acquiescent in view of the lot assigned him by Providence. As such, of course, meekness implies implicit faith in the power, wisdom and love of the controller of Providence. In our Lord himself meekness was the state of mind corresponding to the purpose of his life—"Lo, I come to[1] do thy will, O God"; and in his case this meekness was apparent in every rela-

[1] Heb. 10 : 7.

tion. He seems, so far as concerned his humanity, to have looked upon himself merely as an agent,—his aim being merely to fulfil the will of God. Besides this, as he looked upon all the characters and circumstances about him as other agents whose work it was to fulfil the same will, what other feeling than meekness could he have? He was as God had made him. Surrounding characters and circumstances were as God had made them; and the play of thought and action between him and them was as God had designed it. It was his duty, first, to go forward and perform the will of God so far as he knew what it was, and with what materials he could find about him; and, second, to accept without complaint whatever consequences might ensue. At the beginning of his career, his own position in life was humble. He could influence only the humble. What of that? He chose unlettered fishermen for his disciples, and meekly made the best of their lack of other training, by saying, to himself as well as to them, that he would make them fishers of men.[1] Simon was stubborn and pushing. What of that? The Master welcomed the character as he found it, and, meekly having faith that all was for the best, termed him not the stubborn one, but Peter, his rock.[2] James and John were passionate and rash. What of that? He meekly recalled that fiery natures kindled from a high source may manifest light that flashes from a high source; and he surnamed them his "Boanerges,[3] sons of thunder." Even

[1] Mark 1 : 17. [2] Mat. 16 : 18. [3] Mark 3 : 17.

Judas, who betrayed him, and the Pharisees, who secured his crucifixion, could not startle the serenity of his spirit. They did these things "because the scriptures[1] must be fulfilled." Thus "it behooved the Christ to suffer."[2] In these ways our Lord, accepting, first, the wish of the Heavenly Father as his own, was enabled to accept as his own all the orderings of that Father. In accordance with the same principles, you and I, friends, if we have meekness to seek, first, the Kingdom of God, by which is meant the sway, the orderings, of God and of his righteousness—i. e., what he considers right—can have all these things added unto us; can accept and welcome them as tho we felt them to be our own, i. e., we can inherit, own, all things. Do you doubt this? Do you imagine it too subtle a principle to become practical in everyday life? Subtle it is, because it is spiritual; but for all that, there is no reason why it should not become practical. For instance, we all have neighbors whose circumstances may be considered better than are our own, at least in some one, or, it may be, in many regards. These neighbors have been more fortunate in business, have inherited more wealth, have a higher social position, are more influential, attractive, admired, beloved, or, at least, have more friends. Every one of us, probably, can recall one or more neighbors or acquaintances who, in some one or more regards, may be said to surpass ourselves. Some of us, too, are wretched all our lives because, in just the features

[1] Mark 14 : 49. [2] Luke 24 : 46.

upon which we should like to pride ourselves exclusively, some one either is, or is supposed by some to be, superior. Look at the petty jealousies among even small girls, and rivalries among boys, and listen to the gossip and slander awakened by causes such as these. Not to mention the grosser and more intense competitions of business life and of social life as exemplified by the strife for leadership among the four hundred of New York or Newport, one-half of all the conversation of every village is made up of insinuating expressions of spite on the part of opposing claimants for superior distinction. Now, it is evident, that all this sort of thing, and all the ill-feeling in which it originates, or which it occasions, is a manifestation of intrinsic lack of meekness. Why should you or I care to be superior to anyone? Evidently we should not, were we not more anxious for our own exaltation than for theirs; more than this, unless we were more anxious to have our own way about this matter than that of Providence which endowed with whatever is possessed both them and us. Suppose now that we had the meekness to keep ourselves and our own wishes in the background, and to accept the orderings of Providence as manifested both in others' circumstances and in our own, what would ensue? Why, friends, we should begin not only to be pleased with the prosperity granted to others, but we should begin to feel, to become conscious in our spirits, to have the idea, that we ourselves had some share in that prosperity. Do you remember that story about the

Chinaman? A very poor man himself, he encountered, one day, an old friend who had become suddenly wealthy, and who was about to pass him without recognizing him. This former friend was drest in a heavy and expensive suit of very elaborately carved ivory. The poor man instantly prostrated himself before the other, giving vent to the most gushing expressions of gratitude. "But what have I done for thee?" said the wealthy friend. "Done?" exclaimed the poor man, "Hast thou not selected and purchased this elegant and weighty attire, and loaded it upon thy shoulders, that I, poor wretch, may have a vision of unrivalled beauty at which to gaze and wonder?" The Chinaman was a far better philosopher than you and I are Christians, if we fail to recognize the truth of the principle to which he gave expression. To whom belongs the beauty of the faces, forms or robes of our neighbors? Is it not attractive in so far alone as it is seen? Who sees it?—our neighbors or ourselves?—Our neighbors never, except when standing in front of their mirrors. It is ourselves that perceive it. In so far as concerns the possession of a view of it, then, is it not ours? Why does it not belong to us? Why should not we ourselves receive, and be conscious of receiving, the main pleasure that it affords?—I think that I can indicate the reason. We have not the spirit to appropriate it. What spirit could appropriate it? That question is easy to answer.—The spirit of the mother who should perceive all that beauty and brightness in connection with the per-

son of her own child; the spirit of the husband who should perceive them in a wife; or of the brother, who should perceive them in a sister. No jealousy, no spite, no wretchedness then! Why not? On account of the spirit behind the eyes that viewed them, —the family spirit, comprehensive to appropriate the endowments of every member of the household as its own. But, by the testimony of Jesus, do we not all belong to the family of the Heavenly Father? By the testimony of reason, do we not all belong among the offspring of the Creator? And is there no spirit in accordance with which the Christian may appropriate the endowments of every member of all the spiritual household, or the man, merely as a human being, appropriate those of all humanity? The spirit to which I refer is that which has faith in the God who has allotted to men these different endowments,—the spirit that has a fellow feeling for those to whom they have been allotted. It is the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is the spiritual state of meekness. Animated by it, a man may move through the world, and not alone the heaving mountain ranges and the nestling lakes, the lofty forests and the lowly flowers, but every mighty man of influence in the state and all others down to the little children romping on the roads and swinging on the gates,— all of the growth, the wealth, the beauty, the brightness of the earth, he may be conscious that he owns— not, it is true, materially,—to clutch and keep as might the miser in his misery; but nevertheless ideally, spiritually, in just as true a sense as does

the God who also, in this world, does not lay material hands upon them, and as did the Lord Jesus who, far from this, let all the world lay hands, and violent hands, upon himself. In spirit, the meek shall inherit the earth! Why should they not? In spirit, they are Christ's, and Christ is God's, and God's are all things.

Notice, however, that, in order to have this inheritance, a man must possess this consciousness of appropriation not alone as a transient but also as a permanent sentiment. Suppose, for instance, a person, rich, honorable, intelligent and cultured, to reside in a neighborhood where the masses of the people are poor, immoral, uninstructed, unrefined. It is easy enough to see that, in view of the circumstances, this man may pursue one of two entirely different courses. He may live for himself alone, with utter disregard of the necessities of those about him. Or he may live for them. He may apprehend that, however much these people may differ from him, externally and materially, nevertheless, internally and spiritually, they are all children of the same heavenly Father. In other words, he may have the meekness to recognize that, spiritually, they have the same right to possess wealth, honor, education or culture that he himself has. Recognizing this fact, he may start out, not in a precipitate or fanatical way, but in a rational, judicious, cautious way—for I am talking now of a man eminently, almost divinely wise—to share with them, as a steward of God, those blessings which, through the incidents

of birth or fortune, have fallen to himself. So far as the people are poor, he may do his best to give them—not alms—it is no blessing to a neighbor to make him feel that he is a beggar—not alms, but work, and fair wages, which alone, when given together, impart competence without impairing independence. So far as the people are uneducated and irreligious, he may do his best to institute social reforms, found schools, sustain churches. Now, let these agencies, thus set in operation, go on and exert their legitimate results. Do you not think that in the enhanced neatness and sweetness of the dresses and houses of the poor, in their more genial manners and decorous morality, apparent everywhere, that this man will recognize that the sphere of his own nature and taste is widening,—that his own spirit, because of its influence, is actually passing into possession of the whole community? And think of the reflex effect of all this upon the consciousness of the benefactor! Does not the mother, in the most humble circumstances, enjoy her child more,—has she not more pride and pleasure in him —when she has expended a little care upon him, and he comes into the sitting room washed and neatly drest to meet the visitors? Does she not enjoy her own parlor more, when it is swept, and dusted, and put to rights, and decked with fresh flowers or clean curtains?—Well, all the principles of religion, like those of charity, begin at home! Extend the method of which I have been speaking to all one's surroundings. Let it reach outside of the narrow limits of

one's own household. Why would not this lead to an interest, just as enjoyable—nay, more enjoyable because less selfish—in seeing all the outside people of one's town better clothed, housed, educated, behaved? Believe me, friends, this would lead to an experience of Christian life infinitely more blessed because more Christ-aimed, than any possible amount of singing, preaching or praying.

You think, perhaps, that this view is too subtle, too idealistic to apply,—to make your own in practice. You would not, had you tried it once,—had you risen in your spirit to the view-point of the Master, and, forgetful of yourselves, and thoroughly in sympathy with him, come back to earth to watch the good with enthusiasm and the beautiful with inspiration, because both alike are adding to his glory. You would not, had you tried it once, had you surrendered all your being to his service, had your spirit, like a butterfly leaving its chrysalis, burst the body of its selfishness, and risen to that higher life where every supreme interest is connected with developments everywhere of love, joy,[1] peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, which are the fruit of the spirit.

But if any of you think the view thus presented is too subtle, too idealistic, let us test it by your own measure,—by its influence upon real things. I have said that in the case of our Lord the statement was not only spiritually—i. e., ideally—but literally true; "the meek shall inherit the earth." We know

[1] Gal. 5 : 22.

that it was his meek spirit, submitting to rejection and crucifixion, that enabled him to manifest the divinity of love in such a manner as to draw all[1] men unto him; as to make Christianity the most powerful influence in the world, an influence which, as we hope, shall ultimately subdue all things to itself. Why should not a manifestation of the same spirit which was so powerful in his life, and has been so efficacious since his death, do the same for his followers? Suppose, for instance, that you and I, because we are Christ's and Christ is God's, were to begin, ideally alone, to look upon the world as the Master himself did,—as a place in which to perceive and to perpetuate the glory of the common household which, inasmuch as we, too, are a part of it, is our own. What would be the practical result? Suppose that we were really to begin, in all cases, to take pride and pleasure in another's beauty, wealth, accomplishments, means of influence,—for all these, tho of inferior rank to positive goodness, are nevertheless gifts that God has bestowed—suppose that we were to begin to take pride and pleasure in them,—would not the persons possessing them, perceiving from our actions that we had a fellow feeling with them, begin, in return, to trust us and to love us, even to the extent of sharing with us and devoting to our services, in a literal, material sense, the gifts and goods with which God had prospered them? In this case, inheriting the earth in spirit, what would it be except, as in the case of our

[1] Jno. 12 : 32.

Lord himself, the preliminary condition to inheriting it in reality? And if we all had this spirit, if we all had the meekness that seeks another's not necessarily in preference to one's own good, but as well as one's own good, how long do you think it would be before, literally, every one of us would inherit all things?—have all things literally—so far as we, in turn, were not selfish about them—at our disposal?

Yet, if we look about us, how far do we find this condition of things from being realized! We see thousands who reckon their incomes by thousands of dollars, and yet reckon their benefactions literally by hundreds of cents. They think, because this money has been earned and belongs to them, that they have a right to keep it—almost all of it,—and are wise in keeping it. They mistake; they have too limited ideas about the extent of God's purposes with reference to themselves. He has given them the whole world, and this money to spend upon it in making it more delightful. How little conception of this fact there is in what we term, and in those who term themselves, our American aristocracy,—in those who, when two or three of them meet together, "remember to forget" that the Lord is the Maker of them all. How long shall such as they fill our churches as well as our homes, our Sunday schools as well as our day-schools? It is the meek,—not the monied or the proud in any sense,—that shall ultimately inherit the earth,—inherit it in those sublime sympathies, and immortal aims that expand the soul that trusts in God until the things of God ap-

pear one's own; inherit it in receiving for oneself the love and service which always flow, like water to an emptied reservoir, toward any heart made lighter by the love and service rendered others. It is with love, as it is with fire. Let it be kindled once; let enough of a draft blow on the spark to start a flame; no trouble after that! The fire itself creates a vacuum that draws with every breath a greater draft. Wherever love begins to flame, expending all its inward force on words and deeds that manifest it, there with every breath is drawn more force of love from the resources of the world about. Be not afraid, friends of the faith that prompts you to live for others. The warmth of your affection, the brightness of your zeal, are heat and light that draw the more, the more that they expend. This is the sphere in which the man who tries to "save his life[1] shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life shall find it." This is the place where "whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased[2] and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." This is the state in which the meek man who has been lavish with his own endowments and possessions that he may thus advance the good of earth and of heaven is himself advanced to a literal as well as to a spiritual inheritance of both.

[1] Mat. 16 : 25.

[2] Luke 14 : 11.

XVIII

THE SPIRITUAL SOLUTION FOR SOCIALISTIC PROBLEMS

"But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."—1 Cor. 12 : 7.

There are two ways of regarding the forms apparent in the world about us. We may look upon them separately or collectively; as existing in and for themselves, or as different manifestations of some one thing that exists behind them. For instance, we observe the conditions of life, and, after we have observed them, we distinguish from one another the rich and the poor, the intelligent and the ignorant, the healthy and the sickly, the capitalists and the laborers, the masters and the servants. We may look upon the classes thus observed separately, as existing in and for themselves; or collectively, considering each as a manifestation of the one body, social, political or human, of which it is recognized to be a constituent member. At first thought, it may seem to make little difference in which of these two ways we regard them. But a moment's reflection will reveal our error. Suppose that a man find himself among the number of the rich, the intelligent, the healthy, the capitalists, the masters,— few, of course, belong to all these classes,

but occasionally one does. If so, and if his thoughts dwell only on this fact, will he not be in danger of becoming heady and haughty, of beginning to think, not like the Brahmins of India alone but like the more enlightened nobleman of Europe, that he is the especial protégé of Providence; that, actually, a different blood washes his blue veins from that which dyes the more ruddy brow and hand of the Psudra? On the other hand, suppose that his humbler friend look alone upon the poverty and ignorance, sickness and servitude that have fallen to his lot,—will he not be in danger of deriving from the same an impression of the partiality of Providence, and a lesson of distrust and despondency? Evidently such must be the case; and if, by any method, we could make the former think less of himself, and the latter think more of himself, should we not be doing a little, at least, toward promoting the kindliness and the happiness of our fellows? The only way of accomplishing this object is through rendering the proud man, if we can, conscious that he is no better off, and the humble man, if we can, conscious that he is no worse off, than is his neighbor. But how can the one be made to appear no better off, and the other no worse off? It evidently cannot be done at all, so long as we regard alone the external forms in which their different conditions manifest themselves. The externals of wealth and health are certainly more desirable than are those of poverty and disease. In what degree they are not so, can be recognized in so far only as one

through some method, can learn to look below appearances to certain conditions and demands of humanity to which that which underlies all the different appearances must minister. But how can one learn to do this? How can he learn to look upon his own sphere of life and the spheres of others in such a way as to estimate them, not according to the incidents of circumstance or the accidents of fortune, but according to principles of such a nature as to reconcile each to his own allotted station? This is a problem which sociologists of every age have sought to solve. In our own country we began to try to solve it and to reconcile men to themselves and to one another by doing away with political and social distinctions of rank. All men, declared the founders of our institutions, are created free and equal. So we banished from the midst of us the royalty and nobility of Europe, and made every man a ruler because a voter. Nevertheless, notwithstanding this attempt on our part, we have already developed political rulers who, by means of party organizations and what are called rings, have rendered it well-nigh as difficult for the people here to give a free and truthful expression to their opinions as to do it in the mother country. Already, as a natural result of commercial enterprise, the resources of money, and with it power, have been concentrated into the hands of the few to such an extent that we are threatened with an aristocracy of wealth, in many of its features as domineering and oppressive as anything of the kind to be found in Europe.

Our country has tried also universal and free education. But this has not brought to men a sense of equality. The sneers of the better educated, because of their own better minds or greater advantages, prove that there can be snobs in learning as well as in other departments. Nor has negro-suffrage done away with the unjust distinctions of race; nor will woman suffrage do away with those of sex. Only a few days ago, I heard an advocate of this latter panacea shriek out to women who did not wish to vote that no slaves were more despicable than the voluntary ones. So, merely because of different tastes, this change, if it come, may bring new inequalities;—a Brahmin and a Psudra caste among the women. It is evident that these reforms, all well enough, it may be, so far as they go, fail to go sufficiently far to secure that reign of universal kindness and happiness which their advocates are accustomed to foretell.

The reason appears to be this:—that the changes are merely reformations; in other words, they are changes merely in the forms of life; whereas, what is needed in order to secure more kindness and happiness, is that all of us shall care less for the forms than for that of which all the forms, social, political or human, are merely different manifestations. It might be delightful if all the houses in the world were palaces, and all of us could issue from them in coaches. But households, even in palaces, could not be managed without some to do the work of servants; and coaches need coachmen.

It might be more convenient for all of us, if, instead of walking or rowing when on a journey, we could avail ourselves of railways and steamboats. But no trains or boats could run without common laborers to dig out coal from the mines, drag it to the furnaces, and stoke the fires. So we see that, no matter how high in society may be our relative position, we are dependent for our comfort and convenience upon others, however low may seem their position. In fact, it is easier to explain the utility of the lower than of the higher classes, just as it is easier to explain the utility of the foundations of a palace than that of its beautiful gables and turrets. I believe, however, that these latter have their uses. So, I believe that the higher classes have their uses. If you go to England, you find, near almost every village, the residence of some nobleman. His grounds extend into an immense park, planned and cultivated with scrupulous care. As a rule, too, the park is kept open for the enjoyment of all who choose to enter it. To have this park in one's neighborhood, therefore, is a distinct advantage, even if it involve having there also the rich man whose palace it surrounds. As society is constituted, it seems almost necessary in every community to have certain persons with wealth and leisure, who can study, improve, enlighten and beautify the life about them, and, through their example, furnish a stimulus to healthful emulation and industrious thrift on the part of others. So, it seems that both classes, the high and the low—tho not necessarily as wide apart

as at present—must exist and should exist. Each needs the other. If we cannot abolish the distinctions between them, how can we abolish the evils of too great haughtiness and too great humiliation that result from them?

The answer to this question seems to be contained in the statement in our text. When we speak of society, of human life, or of the world, and say that every class is of value to it as a whole, what do we mean except that every class is of value to the Ruler whose laws are expressed in the arrangements of society, of human life and of the world?—whose authority stands behind existing conditions, controlling and impelling their different forms to accomplish its purposes? Therefore, says our text, the manifestation of the Spirit, i. e., the different forms of life, of ability, of endowments, of gifts, through which the wish, the will, the design of God, who is the Spirit, manifest themselves—in other words, the peculiar manifestation of the Spirit made through each, "is given to every man to profit withal."

The first sense in which it seems natural to interpret this statement is that the manifestation is given to the profit of all men collectively. The words, as shown in the context, refer especially to the church; but the principle is universal. It applies to all spheres of action. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man for the profit of all. "There are diversities of gifts," says the Apostle, in introducing the subject, "but the same Spirit, and there

are differences of administration but the same Lord." "Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him, and if they were all one member, where were the body? . . God hath tempered the body together . . that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another; and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." The truth brought out here is that each should learn to look away from the individual form of the manifestation to the body Spiritual, and that, if he do this, he can find a place, in the economy of God, for himself not only but for every one else. Here is an invalid unable to lift a finger. What good can he do?—He can manifest patience, gentleness, considerateness, self-denial; and, even without manifesting these, because his disease may sometimes get the mastery of him, he can cultivate them in others who are waiting upon him. So the poor can cultivate in the whole body benevolence; the ignorant, communicativeness; the rich, industry; the aristocratic, deference; the refined, delicacy. There is no one in the economy of God who fails to occupy some sphere from which he can exert some needed form of influence. No one who is trying to live true to the promptings of the Spirit of God, however limited his success, is not benefiting to some extent the whole body Spiritual.

But our text is susceptible of another interpretation. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to the

profit, not only of all men collectively, but of every man individually. This truth also is clearly brought out in the context:—"The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor, again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary, and those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. . . . God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked that the members should have the same care one of another." So I say that the text teaches that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to the profit of every man individually. This is more difficult to understand than the truth already considered. It is easy enough to perceive how servants and common laborers, how sick and poor, ignorant and afflicted people, should be beneficial to the whole body, social or spiritual. But how it is better for you and me individually to be the hewers of wood, the drawers of water, the errand-runners, the beasts of burden, the invalids or the inefficient among the rest of humanity,—this is very difficult to understand. Yet there is a way of looking even at this aspect of the subject which might change our opinion of it. The most important consideration in life is not concerning the form of one's service, but concerning that of which the form, and all forms equally, may be manifestations,—not concerning the thing we do, but concerning the spirit

in which we do it. And if we do it in a restless, complaining, rebellious spirit because, forsooth, we are hindered from doing something that we think more worthy of our efforts, the noblest calling in life might be ours, and yet cause our life to be a failure. If, for instance, the end of my existence were to become an author, I could learn to compose in a hovel as well as in a palace. And I could find excuses, too, in either place, to prevent my developing my abilities just then and there. In the hovel, I might think that I was too poor to waste my time in study; and, in the palace, I might think that I was too well off to feel the stimulus needed in order to make me improve my position. Yet neither excuse would be a valid one. Very great authors have sprung from places as low and as high as these. The true way to look upon such matters is this:—The aim of life is discipline. The place where we receive the discipline is a subordinate consideration,—except, perhaps, as related to what seems to be a general rule, namely, that that which is the most disciplinary is apt to be the least delightful. So it happens that, no matter what may be our circumstances in life, we all, very frequently, feel the need of putting up the prayer expressed in that old hymn of George Herbert, entitled "The Elixir":

> Teach me, My God and King,
> In all things thee to see,
> And what I do in anything
> To do it as for thee.
>
> A man that looks on glass
> On it may stay his eye;

Or, if he pleaseth, thro' it pass
And then the heaven espy.

All may of thee partake,
Nothing can be so mean
Which with his tincture (for thy sake)
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine.
Who sweeps a room as for thy laws
Makes that and the action fine.

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold;
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for less be told.

This introduces the third interpretation of which the text seems susceptible. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal, not only in the sense that men, collectively and individually, may be profited by it; but that all ought to be profited by it,—that all are under obligation to make it profitable. According to the passages following our text, this is to be done, first, through performing the duty allotted to us; and, second, through having charity for those who are performing, in a different place and way, the duties allotted them. "The manifestation of the Spirit," says the Apostle, "is given to every man to profit withal. . . . All these worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. . . . For the body is not one member but many. . . . If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing; if the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members, every one of them, in the body as it hath pleased him. . . .

The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. . . . And God hath set some in the church; first, Apostles. . . . Are all apostles . . . are all teachers . . . have all the gifts of healing; do all speak with tongues; do all interpret?—But covet earnestly the best gifts," i. e., strive in your own line, without neglecting that which is your duty, to better your own condition, "covet earnestly the best gifts; and yet show I unto you a more excellent way. Tho I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

The way, then, in which we should profit by the fact that the spirit manifests itself in different forms of life—in society, the state and the church, wherever it may be—is, first, through doing the duty allotted to us; and, second, through having charity for those who are doing, in a different place and way, the duties allotted to them. Think how unlike this method is to the one most frequently adopted in life. Nothing in the world is perfect. Everything, at times, goes awry. When this fact becomes apparent with reference to any particular condition with which one has to do, think how many people are always springing up to tell him two things,—first, not to work in the place where he is, and, second, not to have any charity for others working in the places where they are. The striker, for instance, first stops working even in places where not to work

may deprive others of fuel and food; and then he tries to stop others from working,—sometimes an employee who has a family dependent on his wages, and sometimes an employer who has property dependent on the strikers' work. The result, so far as it leads to violence, usually leads to failure. Nor does the professed reformer often act more wisely. Look at his latest achievement in our own country.[1] The negro had been a slave. In that condition he had necessarily acquired certain servile traits. It was important to cure him of these traits; but how? A wise man, it seems to me, would have said, treat him like a human being, a child,—educate, enlighten, train him, allow him to work where, how and when he chooses, and gradually fit him for citizenship, and, when fitted, give it to him. But, instead of this, the reformer said, "No; make him a ruler at once without any preparation; give him a vote, and tell him to fight for it, if it be denied him." So the reformer did his best to induce the negro not to work in the place where he was; and not to exercise charity for others working in the places where he wanted to be; and, in this way, the reformer has started conditions that for fifty or a hundred years to come may lead to discontent, disorder, riot, and possibly war. The same sort of action is sometimes advocated in churches. Certain of their members manifest inconsiderateness, jealousy, discourtesy, contention, enmity. What is needed? More of the Spirit of Christ. What is tried? Some of the people cease to work in

[1] The condition in 1870.

the place where they are. Then, after a little, they leave their own church, and join another; Baptists or Methodists become Presbyterians or Episcopalians, or they leave one strong church for another of their own denomination, and make two weak ones; and they prefer to do this, because, in a weak communion, they themselves can appear to be strong as compared with things about them. The truth is that the day laborer, the negro, or the church member, who, notwithstanding unfavorable conditions in the place in which he finds himself, continues, just then and there, to do his duty, so far as concerns his obligations to further the welfare of others as well as of himself,—he is the one who, as a rule, is doing the most for his fellow-laborer, his race, and his religion,—far more good than is possible to the man whose jealous discontent, not to say anything of his self-seeking emulation, is merely trying, irrespective of obligations to others, to get out of one place and into another. But, you ask, is not getting out of one place and into another important for the development of the individual and of the world? Certainly; but if a young man—a crown prince, say—wants to be at the head of a family or a kingdom, it is more important for both of these, as well as for himself, that he should wait until he gets an education or other needed experience, than that he should start out, at once, to assassinate his father. Aside, too, from waiting till the old men die, there are other legitimate ways of rising in the world. Patient diligence, alertness, persistence, and making one's self

indispensable can usually bring success without one's need of ignoring his obligations to others. Even if such were not the case, it would be better never to rise at all than to do so at the expense of a mad scramble, trampling into an early grave conditions essential to the welfare of one's fellows as well as to the salvation of one's own soul. This is the same as to say that it makes a great difference what, when one is trying to rise in life, is the motive that actuates him, whether he be moved by a selfish discontent with his own condition, or by a generous purpose to benefit the condition of all; whether he seek the change in order ruthlessly to further his own personal interest, or to further the possibility of that manifestation of the Spirit which is given to every man to profit withal. A man's motive must be considered. But how, you may ask, are we to determine his motive? How?—At times, by exercising our common sense, and our knowledge of human nature. At other times, and very frequently, in no way at all. Only God, who can look upon the naked heart, can determine motives infallibly. Two men may advocate the same measure in almost the same language; the one may be a humanitarian, and the other a hypocrite; the one a philanthropist, and the other a sycophant; the one a religious man, and the other a rascal. In all departments where there are laborers, by and by, at the coming of the Son of Man to select his own, two shall be in the same field, working side by side; the one shall be taken[1] and the other left. These

[1] Mat. 24: 40.

facts furnish only additional illustrations of the great truth indicated everywhere in the Scriptures, namely, that there is no external test invariably applicable to determine the quality of human actions. This, indeed, is one reason why one's place or position in life, as I have been trying to show this morning, is so unimportant. There is no occupation or organization with which men may be connected, whether they be in a political party, a reformatory association, or a church,—there is nothing of this kind, nor any enthusiasm that they may show in furthering the interests of anything of the kind, that can determine their position with God. To Him every one of us, individually, irrespective of where we are or with whom we are, must give an account of[1] himself. This is an additional reason, as you see, why, as an individual, one should have diligence in the place where Providence has put him, and, inasmuch as he never can interpret another's motive, should have charity for those, whether apparently above him or below him, who are working in their own way in some other place.

I cannot close this discussion without directing your attention to the degree in which it confirms the opinion of those who believe that the only permanent cure for social evils must be effected through religion. When using the word religion in such connections, I never mean dogmatism or ritualism. If I did, I should not use the term religion. I mean by the word the expression and embodiment in the

[1] Rom. 14 : 12.

common affairs of every-day life of faith in God and charity toward man. If our communities could only be persuaded to act according to the principle that I have been trying to unfold this morning, with how many of the causes of envy, strife, sorrow and suffering would it do away! Meanwhile, you and I can help on the good time by, each of us, doing individually what we can to forward it. Let us believe, whatever may be our position in life, that the Infinite Presence cannot be absent from us wherever we may be. No matter what others may think of our station or service, just in front of us is work to do. Our feeble sight may detect in it nothing beautiful, yet, to the eyes that heaven has opened, it may be radiant with celestial glory. Let us remember that the Master himself, when he started upon his career, was among the number of the weary and the heavy laden. From that number, too, he chose his earliest followers. So far was he removed from intercourse with those who were robed in the purple of the rich or crowned with the diadems of the royal, that the only occasion upon which he was ever invested with a semblance of either was brought about at the instigation of malice, and greeted with the howls of mockery. "Blessed are the poor[1] in Spirit," he said, "for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted; blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Ah, friends, if the poverty, the sorrow, the humiliation of the forms of life, allotted

[1] Mat. 5 : 3-5.

to us teach us to look away from these forms themselves, and to look back of them to that which is causing all things "to work[1] together for good to them that love God"; if they lead us to look back to that spirit of love manifested and crucified in the Christ, till we acknowledge the claims of God upon our whole heart's devotion, little matter, so long as the soul prospers, what may be our position or occupation for a few years in this life here. If only the burden of existence press down so heavily upon us as to bring us upon our knees before God, thank him! If only the floods of sorrow overwhelm us until, through our streaming eyes, the temptations of the world grow dim and unalluring, thank him! If the doors of all the culture and the comfort that our tasks might crave be barred against us, till beneath the gloom and the tempest of a midnight sky our souls are thrilled with joy to catch the twinkling of a single star, thank him!

And looking up to him, and looking out for him, in all our labors, do you think that we can fail to find him everywhere?—in every cause that can enlist our interest; and working with all the comrades laboring at our side whom his commission glorifies, no matter what their station? You learned and rich men, do you despise the ignorant, and the poor? Ah, could you see them with the spiritual eyes above, you might find everyone surrounded by a halo blazing with reflected light, bright as an angel-messenger luring you to share with him, as the great Master

[1] Rom. 8 : 28.

did with all of us, your wisdom and your wealth! You, too, who seem to have been bereft of every opportunity for gaining influence or fortune, are you tempted into envy or maliciousness toward others whom this world esteems your betters? Could you, in your turn, look on them with the spiritual eyes of those above, you might perceive them not as mere repressors or dictators, obstructing effort and denying recognition, but as needed overseers and trainers disciplining life according to the way most certain to develop that humility and patient acquiescence in the orderings of Providence which alone best fit the spirit to accept with wisdom and receive with profit "every good[1] and every perfect gift." Shame on us, friends, what are we thinking of amid despondencies and doubts and murmurings? What are we thinking of but ourselves?—ourselves, when the Christ came from heaven to suffer and to die that he might bring us love, and free us from ourselves! Ourselves, when the Spirit of God, with the keys of all the universe in his grasp, comes calling to our inefficient, groveling energies, "whosoever will[2] let him take freely"! Up, up, friends, up, till we have learned to look at all things from the highest view-point! When we have once done that, no place on earth, no station where we may be put—nothing within the bounds of these material skies—can have substantiality enough to wall the spirit out of its inheritance.

[1] James 1 : 17. [2] Rev. 22 : 17.

XIX

CIVIL LIBERTY AS A RESULT OF CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."—2 Cor. 3 : 17.

The arrangements of nature are complete and harmonious in every particular. We find in them no partial, one-sided, over-balancing developments. All is in equipoise. There is never created a desire in any man, without the creation also of something to assuage it. There is never an aspiration, craving for something noble, without also a method by which the object of the aspiration may be gained. Accordingly, when we look back into history and hear of one purpose, echoed steadily along the whole past, and projected out through the misty future, we can believe, almost without investigation, that what we call revelation will have something to say about it. Liberty has been the rallying cry of civilization. It would be strange if it had nothing to do with the progress of Christianity, which has marched, breast to breast, with civilization all through such a large part of the brightening highway of time.

And when we turn to the Scriptures, we do not find ourselves mistaken. From Genesis to the Revelation we read of the progress of a plan for liberty.

For this, apparently, man was made in the image of his Maker, the law was given to Moses, Jesus Christ suffered and died, and heaven is promised. It is a beautiful picture. All the world struggling up through the darkness of the weary years on the one hand. On the other hand, a loving God crowning the summit of their hopes with light to guide through the dangers and to insure success.

The Bible claims to be an inspired record of the development of good and evil in the world. It is, besides this, and from this very fact, a record of the respective developments of liberty and bondage. Our first parents sinned, and felt the earliest infringement of liberty from the sword[1] flaming at the garden gate. Cain murdered his brother, and was banished[2] from his fellows. The men at Babel[3] became presumptuous, quarreled, and separated; and the sphere of freedom was contracted to the limits of isolated races with different languages and customs. The license of crime in all these cases had rendered freedom no longer a safe possession. On the contrary, on condition of obedience, Abraham[4] received promise of becoming the founder of a great, independent nation. When, in partial fulfilment of this promise, Israel was led out of the bondage of Egypt, the prophecy came from Sinai, "If ye walk[5] in my statutes and keep my commandments and do them . . . I will give peace in the land and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid."

[1] Gen. 3 : 24. [2] Gen. 4 : 8-14. [3] Gen. 11 : 8, 9.
[4] Gen. 17 : 1-8. [5] Lev. 26 : 3-25.

"But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments . . . ye shall be delivered into the hands of the enemy." In accordance with these statements, the long wanderings during the days of the Judges were punished by occasional captivity, and, finally, by a permanent monarchy substituted for the previous theocratic and representative government. When still further wanderings had brought about despotism and apparently hopeless captivity, the prophets were careful to inform the people that these conditions were not in accordance with the divine purposes. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me," said Isaiah (61 : 1) "because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prisons to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And we are told that the great Master, in the little Synagogue at Nazareth, after reading the same words, closed the book, saying, "This day[1] is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." "Ye have been[2] called," said the apostle Paul (years later) to the church, "to liberty"; "stand fast in the liberty[3] wherewith Christ hath made us free," let all enslaved nations and individuals know that "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

A subject so intimately connected with the world's highest interests ought to command the attention of those who would become either enlightened as

[1] Luke 4 : 16-21. [2] Gal. 5 : 13. [3] Gal. 5 : 1.

Christians or intelligent as citizens. Let us then consider this subject of liberty, what it is, where obtained, and how attainable. I think that it can be shown that all personal, political and civil liberty is the same as what we mean by Christian liberty; and that all Christianity is, from its very nature, emancipating. When I use the term liberty, I mean by it what all understand—what every child understands—by it, i. e., the ability to choose, without consciousness of restraint. I say without consciousness of restraint, because freedom is a conscious feeling. If I feel no restraint, if I am conscious of none, I feel free; I have liberty; if I held the whole universe in my grasp, I could have no more of it. The ability to choose without consciousness of restraint is liberty. If now we take this statement and enlarge it so as to include all the classes of objects and occasions upon which it is possible to exercise choice, we may comprehend the whole scope of personal and civil liberty in this definition,—the ability, without consciousness of restraint, to choose ends and means in all circumstances of time and place. Ends include all mental or material things which we may choose to possess. Means include all feelings, thoughts, actions or objects by which we may choose to obtain the ends or to preserve them when obtained. These two together—ends and means—include all things that we can possibly desire or do. And time extending through all our life, and space encircling all the world are the only circumstances in connection with which we can desire or do any-

thing. Whenever then restraints from each of these four sources—ends, means, time and place—are absent, then, and not till then, the man has liberty.

Where now is this liberty to be obtained? Let us make the search, and, in so doing, let us look for it, first, in our external circumstances, as members of society, as citizens of nations; and, second, in our own individual natures.

It requires no argument to prove that there are limitations to liberty which arise solely from the first of these sources,—from the relations in which we stand to our fellows, from the fact that we are members of society. We can wish for few things which others do not possess. We can use few things which others do not need. We can work for few hours when others would not employ us. We can work in few places from which others would not crowd us. Now what can we do to be free? There are only two things that it is possible to do,—go out of society altogether, or stay in it and reform it. Which course should a man adopt? Should he go out of it, to some lonely island, and live like Selkirk? Should he find liberty there? Undoubtedly, he might thus obtain liberty in some particulars. Limitations arising from the presence of others would be taken away. But there would still be left limitations arising from the demands of his own nature, not so easily removed. There are some things which men universally, and from the very necessity of their manhood, instinctively crave:—among other things,

absence from care, and presence of comfort and of friends. Would he find these ends in solitude? No; nor any means of gaining them;—not if he should search for them all his lifetime. The place would be a prison,—horrible as a prison dooming him to chill stones and clanking chains, and sorrowful cries. With the stormy horizon heaved up like a wall about him, the cold stars welded to the hollow vault above him, the ghost-like waves lashed into moaning on the lonesome rocks, the forests shifting into shades of every shape to dodge and fright him, the winds chasing him with the wild mockery of human voices, —this slave of imagination and despair, with no friend to welcome or encourage him, with no inducement, in the absence of men, to render himself worthy of manhood, is not the one to whom a man with a tithe of sense in him, would turn for an exemplification of that freedom, which is only valuable in the degree in which it tends to make one feel that he is a son of God and a brother of all mankind. And the judgment of common sense on this point is confirmed by the records of common practise. "The liberty of your deliberations is chained down," said Mirabeau to the National Assembly near the opening of the French Revolution. "Liberty is chained down!" echoed the people; and they did not scatter, they closed up together. That surging, roaring mass, which, like a torrent, swept along the frighted streets, and quenched beneath its hissing tide, the flaming guns of the Bastile of Paris gathered all its concentration and power from the

cry of "Liberty!" Every repetition of the cry swelled the forces of the center, and shook the distant springs to gather fresh re-enforcement. The people knew that to procure liberty, was to unite; that in fellowship, in society alone, could they obtain their desired ideal.

Back then, back to society let us go and try to obtain liberty there. At first thought, one would not deem it possible to do so. We find an association of individuals. They either desire a different use of the same thing, and interfere with one another in trying to get, hold and employ it, or they desire a use of different things; and, separating to obtain these, fail because others will not assist them. To have anything like perfect liberty in a community, it seems necessary to have it composed of individuals whose aims do not differ, whose desires are harmonious; so that when one chooses an end, or means, or time, or place, others, far from interfering to prevent, or refusing to assist, will desire nothing more than to have him get his choice. It is evident that, in such a community, the individual will not feel that the fact of being surrounded by others is limiting his freedom with consciousness of restraint. It is equally evident that such a community does not exist on the face of the globe. And why not?—Because there are on the globe no sufficiently disinterested individuals to compose it. Men who choose are too grasping in their desires not to interfere with what belongs to other men. And those who might aid one another, are too selfish to turn from

their own schemes in order to do so. We cannot find liberty in a community, because the character of the individuals composing it prevents liberty. In other words, liberty in a community depends, not on any external adjustments at all, but on the character of the individuals composing it. This seems to be a plain deduction of reason.

Now let us prove the same thing by a fact. Wherever men whose individual action is not dictated by some king, chief or leader come together and form communities, they invariably agree upon certain laws. They mutually decide, for the sake of the general good, to limit one another by these; this is a universal, it seems to be also a necessary, fact. Those whom we term lawless savages, and gangs of thieves, seem to be as strongly convinced of its importance as the wisest statesmen. Being a universal and necessary fact, it is natural to think that it has its rise in something in the man, and not in a source external to him; in other words, this fact of the universal prevalence of law seems to indicate the same thing that we have already proved in another way,—namely, that restrictions of liberty in a community depend not upon external adjustments, but on the character of the individuals composing it.

Let us examine the individual then. What is there within him which makes him feel the necessity of restraint? I answer, an exact resemblance to the state of things existing outside of him. We find here every kind of limitation which our previous definition of liberty excludes. When we desire certain ends,

something within us says: "No, they are unlawful." When we desire certain means, something within us says: "No, they are unlawful." When we desire certain times and places of action, something within warns us against them. There are within us, then, laws of restraint. And not only so; there are also penalties for violating the laws. If we choose the forbidden end, or use the forbidden means, in the time or place against which we have been warned, we are punished by stings of regret, if not remorse. We call the limiting agent conscience. We call the character of things that it forbids, wrong. But whatever may be the nature of the agent forbidding, or of the things forbidden, both are always recognized within us. A very superficial man is he then who would disorganize society, or place himself at the head of it, thinking, by this means, to escape the feeling of obligation to law. Let him look into his own nature. He will find at work there the elements of every phase of mental agony which external bondage could inflict. I do not wonder that, both in America and in Europe, men with liberty upon their lips, but self-seeking in their hearts, complain, at times, of the arbitrary nature of what is often just government, and try to break away from it; or to change it to the detriment of those who live under it. No man, unless he be unselfish—and therefore no mere politician, agitator, or demagogue—can fail to be conscious of restraints within himself and outside himself. He speaks the truth. He does feel the chains of oppression. Of course, that old serpent

of evil will writhe—it is its nature—of course that serpent will writhe beneath the heel of even the gentlest tread of the angel of duty whenever she comes speeding from heaven to guide toward right her earthly wards. The truth is that all external laws when founded on principles of justice are mandates that apply to conduct and pursuits previously forbidden by conscience. It is only where this is the case that they fulfil the ideal of a wise civil government, or fulfil the ideal of moral government. The decalog is a code of external morality; but, if it had never been expressed in words, the principles of universal love and justice underlying it would be binding on the conscience so far as it were enlightened. Prohibitory laws are the reflex, or reiteration, of laws within self. Remove from the individual mind the consciousness of these laws—in other words, the consciousness of restraint or of the need of it in certain cases—and there would be, and could be, no expression of such restraint in the laws of civil government. These laws are made by men in order to prevent some other man from injuring them by doing exactly the evil that they themselves are conscious of desiring to do to him.

We have found at last, then, where liberty is to be obtained,—not in solitude, for there the man suffers from internal restraints;—not in society by external reform, for there, too, it is internal restraint that is the source of limitation; but liberty is to be obtained in the mind of the individual who feels no

consciousness of restraint within himself, and in a community composed of such individuals.

Now can we ever find such individuals? I think that we can,—those, at least, approximating to such a standard. I have already shown that, when we have no feeling that conscience restrains us, it is because we desire to do right. It is not, mark you, because we actually do right,—as a fact we do not always know, especially if children or savages, exactly what the right is. We are conscious of the restraints of conscience at times when we know that it is not our desire to do right. Now what is right? Not to discuss at present, whether it is an absolute principle in accordance with which the will of the Ruler of all things acts, or whether it is originated by this Ruler, every one admits, that it is anything, everything consistent with the will of this Ruler. Nothing which, in the slightest degree, deviates from it, is right. And no one, who consciously deviates from it in his conduct, will fail to feel the rebukes of conscience. Conscience is the consciousness that we are resisting what we know to be the law of right; and, accordingly, are resisting the law of the Ruler of righteousness. Now if to feel no conscience—that is, if to feel no consciousness of restraint—be to desire to act in consistency with the will of the supreme Ruler, i. e., of God, then liberty is the state in which one desires to act in consistency with his will. And if this consciousness would make one individual feel free, it would make a community feel free; it would cause all men, each

working in the best way for which he was individually fitted, to desire the same general result,—the will of God. Moreover, it would cause all to live in harmony, notwithstanding every possible difference in character and choice. It would do this because the objects of God's desire must be infinite in variety and degree. There could be no lack of supply in them for all mankind, and for all the angels and arch-angels of heaven. Any other reservoir might be drained. Any other objects of desire distributed among all might fail to satisfy all. But here each could quaff his soul to the full, and the ocean of God's infinity could close over his draughts without the loss of a ripple. The masses are right. In the last analysis, liberty and happiness are identical. Both are full satisfaction, freedom from all consciousness of restraint.

Now let us inquire how such liberty is attainable. It is evident that a man's character can never become consistent with the will of God until he comes to know and love God, and to desire to do his will. God must reveal himself then. According to the Christian theory, he has done so in two ways,—through law and through life, and, in both ways, as regards each individual, internally and also externally. Through law, God is revealed to us in conscience,—i. e., in that which is written upon the heart, and also revealed through moral or religious codes like the decalog, and other documents written by men more or less inspired. Is there anything in the knowledge of God imparted through law

which can bring a conscious freedom from restraint? Is there anything in the nature of law which can do this? When one has knowingly sinned, conscience inflicts punishment. When one has knowingly committed crime, the government inflicts punishment. Is there anything in the penalties which the criminal feels, to bring him into sympathy with law;—to make him wish to see the law fulfilled? No; rather than this, the effect is to render him resentful, to instigate him to revolt, and to make him bring himself, by this method, under the more severe condemnation of the law. So it is with the laws of God, revealed in conscience, or in moral or religious codes. "The [1] law," says the Apostle Paul, "worketh wrath." "When the commandment [2] came, sin revived." The knowledge of law, and of a law-giver only, is evidently not that knowledge which is to bring us into sympathy with either. We are brought into this sympathy by the kind of revelation that comes through life,—through life experienced in ourselves, and perceived in others;—brought into it through the inspiration of what we all recognize to be the good Spirit working within us, and through the inspiration of the self-denying, self-sacrificing life of the Christ and of his true followers in whom we recognize in the world outside of us an incarnation of this good Spirit. "No man hath seen [3] God at any time, the only begotten son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him." And not only so. "For me [4] to live," says the Apostle Paul, "is

[1] Rom. 4 : 15. [2] Rom. 7 : 9. [3] Jno. 1 : 18. [4] Phil. 1 : 21.

Christ." We love the Christ and the Christian on account of this method of revelation. When we love a friend, we feel free with him because we have no desire to go contrary to his wishes. When we love the great Master, and the God whom he represents, we feel no restraint because we have no desire to go contrary to their wishes. Brought into sympathy with them, we do not violate our moral obligations. We do not feel conscience limiting us. We are scarcely conscious that we have a conscience. We are free. God revealed in law, internal and external, may excite only our opposition. God revealed in the Christ is an emancipator, who sets men free, because his manifested love merges their wills into unison with his own. They have liberty because they no longer feel a consciousness of restraint. Very different is this, as you will notice, from that which is true of those who are satisfied with merely license. These break the laws of conscience and society in spite of feeling restraint. Those possessing liberty cease to feel any restraint at all. It is no longer necessary; because the laws of conscience, society, state or church are perfectly fulfilled. The desire to have them fulfilled,—this is the condition, and the only condition in accordance with which conscious freedom is possible.

Our text shows us—for none of us are perfect—what we must all do in order to obtain individual liberty. "But we all," says the apostle Paul in 2 Cor. 3 : 18, "beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from

glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." There alone is that perfect love, which "casteth[1] out fear," which overcometh the law[2] in our members, warring against the law of our mind; and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members.

The text shows us also what society and the state must do in order to obtain liberty. By the beacon of the ideal, we may discern the direction of the real. That nations are free only when individuals are free, is no more true than that nations are free in proportion as individuals are free. In the degree in which restraints are absent from the personal consciousness of the people, in that degree will an absence of restraint be expressed in the laws that they make for one another. The most barbarous and corrupt rulers and governments are, universally, the most arbitrary. The path to civil liberty lies through the wake of individual intelligence and righteousness. Any state or ecclesiastic, monarchical or hierarchical policy which fosters ignorance and superstition by necessity fosters rulers who cannot appreciate free government; and are fitted to control only slaves, and these by means of despotism. This is why genuine Christianity with its emphasis upon love is needed by the world that it may be the world's civilizer; why Christian education is needed that it may be the world's enlightener; and why Christian statesmanship is needed that, borne

[1] 1 Jno. 4 : 18. [2] Rom. 7 : 23.

along on the resistless undercurrent of eternal truth, it may pilot all governments toward the freedom of the millennium.

But let us not trust too much to any merely human agencies. So long as the spirit of bondage is present as a conscious limiter in the individual heart, so long will restless humanity, goaded by conscience and striving by any means, right or false, to be free, fling aside, with equal readiness, monarchies and republics alike.

There is a meadow in a lonely place between high rocks on the banks of Lake Lucerne. In that spot, five hundred years ago, one still, dark evening, three patriot soldiers, with stout blades and sturdy hearts, met to spend the night in long and earnest prayer to God. "Where the Spirit of the Lord was, there was liberty"; and Swiss Independence dates from that night. "The knowledge of the Lord" has, not yet, "filled the earth[1] as the waters cover the sea"; but there is coming a time when, as we are told, it shall; when all the kingdoms of this earth's monarchs shall become the absolutely free kingdoms of our spirits' Ruler, "the Lord,[2] and of his Christ." Adam's degenerate sons, banished from Paradise—i. e., limited in liberty on account of sin—shall again regain it. Along the pathway of the world's progress, we need not hear alone the wails of woe and the clanking chains of bondage; we need not see alone the flames of cherished institutions, and the stifling smoke of conflict. Beyond all these, there is

[1] Hab. 2 : 14. [2] Rev. 11 : 15.

a stretch of heaven's own blue. There is a gleam of lofty walls. There is the flashing of a flaming sword withdrawn. Between wide open gates, there waits for all the garden.

XX

MEMORIALS AND MEETING PLACES[1]

"Then the king said unto me, 'For what dost thou make request?' So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king, 'If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldst send me unto Judah unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres that I may build it.' . . . So it pleased the king to send me."—Nehemiah 2 : parts of 4, 5, 6.

"And (after the city had been rebuilt) all the people gathered themselves together. . . . And they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses. . . . And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood which they had made for the purpose. . . . And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people. . . . And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen.' . . . And they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord. . . . And the Levites . . . read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading; . . . and the Levites . . . taught the people."—Neh. 8 : parts of 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

As we look back into history, and consider the various stages through which races have emerged from a state of barbarism and passed into one of civilization, we find among the earliest indications of this change an increased attention given to perpetuating the memory of the dead. Among people wholly savage, men are killed upon little provocation, and their bodies are left to decay in the places where they fall. Only as human life becomes more

[1] Delivered, on Sunday, February 25, 1883, in Darby, Pennsylvania, at the dedication of a Sunday-school Chapel, erected to the memory of Mr. Matthew Baird and Mrs. Ann Eliza Baird by Charles O. Baird, Esq., of Philadelphia, assisted in the furnishing of the same by other members of his family.

sacred, and law begins to protect the living, are the remains of the non-living protected against the ravages of sun and storm, the wild beast and the vulture. Many years later than this something is done to mark the place in which the dead are buried. At first mere mounds are left, such as naturally result wherever earth that has been removed to receive the body is replaced. Afterward soil or stone is heaped up to form an artificial mound, as by some of our North American Indian tribes. Later various kinds of boards or boulders are marked in such a way as to indicate the rank or name of the departed. But even these, at first, are intended to remain for only a few years. To-day in most of the countries bordering on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, where the people, if civilized, are, at least, not what we should term enlightened, the dead are buried without coffins, and, every ten or twenty years, the burying ground is plowed over, and all traces of past graves are obliterated. But wherever there has been a high state of civilization, as in Ancient Egypt, Assyria, Palestine, India, China, Greece and Rome, there we find still existing tombs or urns once holding corpses or their ashes. With exception of the ruins of the temples still to be seen, the remains of these memorials of the dead are the most universally present features enabling us to-day to come to an understanding of the characteristics of these people who so long ago passed away from the earth.

There are those in our own country imagining

themselves to be furthering the progress of mankind, intellectually and socially, and to be adding to that which is to give renown to our age, who, at the same time, are denying the possibility of having any certain grounds of assurance with reference to the existence of a God, or of the soul after death. What are likely to be the effects of such views as these upon our civilization, or upon the reputation which it will have in the remote future may be inferred from the fact that almost everything produced in the past would have perished from the earth, had men not had that faith in their gods which led them to erect temples, and that faith in the immortality of the soul which led them to erect tombs. Faith in these things is shown not alone in the architecture, but in the sculpture and poetry of the past, dealing almost exclusively, as much of the latter did, with subjects treating of the gods and of the life beyond the present. It is belief in these that has given earthly, if not heavenly, immortality to those nations. If ever the influence of such belief ceases to be felt among us, what reason have we to infer that the influence of our civilization will not cease to be felt among the nations that shall come after us? It is doubtful whether any individual or community is ever stimulated to the noblest and worthiest achievement except as individuals in it have faith in the possibility of attaining the highest and holiest goal.

The methods of perpetuating the memory of the dead assumed in the past various forms,—simple

grave-stones, elaborate tombs chiseled in the sides of hills, lofty monuments and even pyramids that remain to-day among the foremost wonders of the world. Sometimes the physical form, after life had left it, was embalmed and thus kept from decay. Our large museums all contain bodies from Egypt that, having been thus treated, still preserve the outlines that they had when in life. Sometimes busts, statues and likenesses of many different kinds served to recall the lost one to remembrance. These were prepared usually by the friends of the deceased, but often the rich or the powerful, before they died, took pains to provide for themselves that their memory should not perish. And what more natural than that men should wish to be remembered? It is certainly as natural as that their friends should wish to have them remembered. In fact, does not the same general tendency of thought which causes us to desire to exist in another world, cause us to desire to continue to be known as having existed in this world? Is it not the soul within us—the best part of us—that craves for this continuation of existence, if, in no other way, in the memory of others? Think of it:—What has inspired to the noblest efforts in every department of action,—military, social or intellectual, as well as religious,—what has animated the zeal of the patriot, philanthropist, philosopher or poet, as well as preacher,—sent soldiers to die cheerfully for their country on the battlefield, consoled the hearts of reformers when all forsook them and fled, made the leaders in new opinions defiant in the

face of imprisonment and persecution, as well as rendered the martyrs triumphant at the stake,—what has done all this? Nay, let me put it differently,—what could have done all this, if man had been so constituted as not to care for anything on earth beyond the time of his own existence on it? In those circumstances, would any one ever have been willing to die for his country, his fellow-men, his opinions, or his religion? I hardly think so. Indeed, I think that any desire to continue to be remembered is intimately connected with all within us that is most elevating. More largely, perhaps, than any of us supposes, it is for the sake of reputation after death that every person in mature life, from the humblest parent in the household to the haughtiest prince on his throne, strives while he lives to live to some effect.

It is not merely, however, the wish to be remembered that is felt, but also the wish to continue to be influential,—the wish to continue to produce the effect of being on the earth, even tho one's physical form has been removed from it. A. T. Stewart, the merchant prince of New York, did not leave the bulk of his money for a monument of marble to be erected to his name, but for his business-house, in order that the work that he had done for so many years might continue to be done in his name, as he hoped, for centuries. Shakespeare, Raphael, Washington, Luther,—what memorial do you think that they would have wished in their day, had they been consulted?—Believe me, nothing better than the

writings, paintings, free country, and reformed church which to-day continue to perpetuate their influence.

So I infer that the memorials most desired by those who have passed from earth, and most worthy to be erected by the one who remains behind them, are such as perpetuate their influence. Tomb or statue may do this to some extent by recalling their living presence to memory, but it can be done more effectively when the man's possibilities of action are embodied in some form in which they shall still continue to act,—as words do when printed in books that speak to future readers, as deeds do when incorporated into institutions of learning and philanthropy that continue to enlighten ignorance and to hold out helping hands to the suffering. In what nobler way then could one conceive of perpetuating the influence of those who have been loved—what way more gratifying to the spirits of the departed—than in erecting a memorial building like this, for the purposes for which it is designed?

Suppose that we take the very lowest view of the objects of such a building,—as a place in which, once every week, those who are growing up into manhood and womanhood can come together and look at one another. If no more than this were done here, there would be an immense influence for good going forth from this place. Did you ever think what a civilizing agency association, aside from anything else, is? Take a hermit who lives all alone in a cave or on a mountain; take a tramp who spends his life in jour-

neying all alone over the country,—his hands, feet, face, are always dirty, his hair tangled, his clothing in rags. And not only so. The mind inside of his body is no clearer than his skin, his thoughts are as tangled as his hair, his whole intellectual and moral nature as much in rags as his clothing, his judgment on any practical subject whatever as worthless as his wardrobe. What is the use of a man's keeping his body clean and his wits bright unless there be some inducement to do so—some one to look at him and hear him, live with him and talk with him, work with him and care for him? Put one man beside the hermit, and there will be a beginning there of civilization; put six, a dozen, a score, and there will be a market, at once, for collars, neckties, handkerchiefs. Not only so, there will be conversation, curiosity, information, emulation, the friction of mind against mind that strikes intellectual fire and brings moral enlightenment. Civilization!—The very word comes from the Latin word *civis,* that means a city; and a city is a place where people come together, and, where they do this, there only they learn to be civil, and this they never can be, in the highest sense, unless they first become sympathetic, thoughtful, charitable. So it is a great thing for people to come together.

But, even in a city, they may shut themselves in their own houses, so as to live almost like hermits. It is a great thing, therefore, for them to believe that they ought to come together as a matter of no more, say, than of form, at least once a week,

in a place like this, even if they do no more, when they get here, than sit and look at one another, as our neighbors, the Friends, do on their dull days. Ah, if some of us would only be contented to sit still, and look at the human beings about us long enough to take in what they are, and what are our responsibilities to them, remembering that the Lord has said, "Inasmuch[1] as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me," we should have about all that we could do well in trying to live true to the wisdom that we had gained in this way! However, tho some of us fail to improve as much as we might by coming together, we all do improve some. And most of us do this, too, before we have begun to follow out a single requirement that, so far as we are conscious, is a religious one. There is nothing in the Bible, for instance, that tells us that we should wash our hands and faces and put on clean clothes in which to go to church and school on Sundays. Yet we all do it. And we feel better—more civilized—after we have done it. And when we come together and gaze around us upon others who have done the same, human life seems more sweet and beautiful than it did in the field and in the workshop. And do you think that that can do no good? No good?—Talk about the refining influences of art! There are times when an ordinary church or Sunday School, to one who looks about him and succeeds in keeping his eyes open, is more inspiring to the soul, is more

[1] Mat. 25 : 40.

like heaven, in its influence, than the grandest picture or statue of an angel or a god that was ever painted or chiseled. And yet there are some in our day who would like to abolish the service of the church and the Sunday School—even Sunday itself. Every man to his taste! There are some who would like to abolish soap. The longest step that civilization ever took in that direction would be taken upon the day in which the Sunday School was abolished.

But I must hurry on. When you assemble in this place, you are not only going to be together; you intend to do something together,—for instance, to sing together. Do you know that there is a theory that the tendency of singing is to cause the hearts and pulses of all those joining in the music, even listening to it, to beat in unison?—to cause the currents of life in the veins, nerves, brains, even souls of those affected by it, to move according to similar methods?—in fact, to produce an inner as well as an outer harmony? I am not intending to argue or to confirm this theory, but I will assert this much,—that wherever a number of people utter the same words together, think the same thoughts together, do the same things together, as will be done in this place, at least, for one hour every week, in the way not only of singing, but of praying, reading and studying, the tendency is to bring them into sympathy with one another. And wherever one soul is brought into sympathy with one other—not to speak of many—that soul is brought nearer to heaven. Of course, it must be so, for sympathy is love. And

while "he that loveth not knoweth not God,[1] for God is love," "if we love[2] one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."

And even yet, you see, friends, I have failed to speak of anything except the indirect influence that can be exerted by a building such as this, and by the exercises for which it is designed. I have failed to do this for a very good reason. There was no necessity for it. All the time that you have been sitting here this morning most of you have been thinking about this direct influence—if not wondering whether I should ever get to it;—about the quality of the truth that you intend to have imparted here, about the spiritual effect that you hope that it will exert in regenerating and converting souls and preparing thousands, perhaps, who shall meet here, for usefulness and blessedness in this world and in the world to come. May all your expectations in this regard be realized! May this building, with its attractive proportions, so aptly fitted for the work, accomplish all for which it is designed,—be a center not only of refinement and culture, social, intellectual and moral, but, crowning all, of spiritual benefit. In the degree in which it proves to be this, the cup of gratitude will overflow not only at your lips, but at the lips of him to whose public spirit you owe its construction. In that degree, will its whiteness, its lightness, and its beauty, its open doors and its waiting benches, be truly symbolical of the living presence and influence of those kindly characters to

[1] 1 Jno. 4: 8. [2] 1 Jno. 4: 12.

whose memory it has been erected, one [1] of whom—the best known in this community—never, when living, as all acquainted with him can testify, knowingly turned a deaf ear to the cry of want, or proffered an empty hand to any appeal made in the name of humanity or of its Lord.

Without any exhortation on the part of any speaker, the dictates of the most ordinary appreciation of the object of a building such as this, and the circumstances of its erection, will lead all of us to treasure it, and to do everything in our power to fulfil the ends for which it has been erected. Thus shall we best be showing our gratitude to those generous friends with us to-day, whom it represents. Thus shall we most worthily be carrying on and commemorating the good works of those not now with us of whom it is a memorial, and whom it also represents. But thus, above all, shall we be most effectively continuing the message and the mission of the inspired Master whom it represents. It is not often that the appreciation of the intellect, the gratitude of the heart, the associations of the present, the memories of the past, earthly surroundings and heavenly suggestions, man's aid and God's salvation, every noble inducement, human or divine, unite, as they do here, in order to converge upon a single definite aim,—that of imparting material, intellectual, moral and spiritual assistance to those who are to frequent this place, and thus fulfil the purposes to which it is this day dedicated. May the Source of all good

[1] Matthew Baird.

enlighten our thoughts, strengthen our wills, and guide our actions, so that this offering of love, tendered equally to those who have departed this life, and to those who are still on earth, not only so but to the Christ and to God, may indeed prove to be an inestimable blessing to ourselves and to all this community, both in our own time and for long generations after our children's children shall have been gathered to their fathers.

XXI

BELIEF OF THE HEART AND OF THE HEAD: PRESIDENT McKINLEY AND HIS ASSASSIN[1]

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness."—Rom. 10 : 10.

In trying to direct your attention to a few thoughts that inevitably suggest themselves this morning it has seemed to me that all of them together might be appropriately clustered around a single general principle applying both to individual and to national life, and not only in our own times but in all times. This principle is suggested in the 10th verse of the 10th chapter of Romans, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness."

There is such a thing as belief that is not of the heart. There is such a process as holding an intellectual theory that is not influenced by the emotions. There is such a condition as a man's being led by thought without being moved by love. Wherever this condition exists, there is danger to the individual and to the community. Think of the man who committed that crime in Buffalo, and think of the mental processes through which he arrived at the conclusion which caused him to commit it. His

[1] Delivered in the Second Presbyterian Church of Princeton, New Jersey, on Sunday, September 15, 1901, the day following the death of the President. Reprinted from the Princeton Press.

father, so far as we know the history of the family, was a Pole. He came from a land where there is less freedom for thought and speech and action, probably, than in any place in Europe outside of Turkey. He left his home, and found a refuge in our country, where all the conditions are reversed. But this reversal apparently did not affect the heart of his son. It did not awaken that gratitude which has been manifested by thousands and thousands of others similarly situated. The fact that men in this country are allowed to think and to speak what they choose, and are happier and better because of their being allowed these, this fact had no influence upon him or upon the fellow anarchists with whom, as he grew up, this young man associated. He himself was born in America; but if the reports published in the papers be true, he probably never learned much about America. In his own home he was surrounded by an atmosphere of thought and feeling that was imported from Poland. When he went to school it was not, so far as we are told, a public school, where he could associate with American boys and learn American habits of thought and action. It was a parochial school, where, probably, he associated mainly with other children of foreign extraction. This is an unfortunate characteristic of parochial schools. The most important effect that America has had upon the world is in the inculcating of the belief that all men are brothers; the belief that there are no fixed classes in society; the belief that if one have the mental ability, the physical diligence,

and the right spirit always, he has a chance, which will be denied him by no one, to rise from the lowest station to the highest. There is no place in this world where this conviction is so thoroughly ingrained into one's being and whole conception of life as in the public schools. Some one once told me of Mr. Roosevelt, that he sent his boys, for a while, at least, when young, to these schools as a matter of conscience, so as not to deprive them of that which should cultivate in them this American feeling of equal comradeship with all human beings. The fact is that you and I, all of us, are drops—and no more than single drops—in the common ocean of humanity. Some of us ride on the crest of the wave, where we are flung up to sparkle in the sunshine; some of us are always so far down in the depths that we scarcely know whether there ever is any sunshine. But whether the drops be on the top or at the bottom, any one of them may weigh just as much as any other, and may contribute just as much to the momentum of the general forward movement. This recognition of the worth and dignity of each individual in the community is something that seldom, if ever, comes to those who are educated in schools for the lower classes in the old country; and I believe it sometimes fails to come to those who, in this country, are educated entirely in schools conducted according to methods imported from the old country. One of the most unwise things often that a man can do who has a growing boy needing to be fitted for American life, to be fitted to meet

everybody of every class with a feeling that he is equal to any of them, is to have his training confined to that of one of these schools.

Whether owing to the influences of his school or of his home, or to both, this assassin grew up without any sense of organic connection between himself and the community, or any feeling of responsibility toward it. He joined himself with others—anarchists—of like mind with his own. What are anarchists? They are men who are opposed to society as it has been organized, even tho it be organized, as in our own country, with the intent of securing peace and prosperity for every member of society. Anarchists are opposed to rulers as rulers. They do not wish to be ruled. They say that they want every man to rule himself. What is the result? They bind themselves by oaths that oblige any one of them, when ordered by their leaders, to murder some government official, in circumstances where the assassin will probably be detected and probably be put to death; and if he fail to carry out the order, all the society are pledged to murder him. This obligation to commit murder at the risk of one's own life is what the anarchist professes to believe will tend to obtain for the world each man's freedom to rule himself! We all know how we have solved this question of freedom in our own country—by allowing each to express his opinions at the ballot box, and then all agreeing, after this has been done, to submit to the opinions of the majority.

But it is not anarchy to which I wish to call your

attention this morning so much as to the state of mind that leads to the expression of anarchy. Whether or not an American education could have given this man more love may be doubted. I myself do not doubt it. I believe that American institutions —among them American public schools—were founded on the principles of the Bible, and, in a less degree, perhaps, but in just as true a sense as Christian churches, are means of grace. But be that as it may, the fact is indisputable that no man can be an assassin or an anarchist, who, for some reason, has not separated his mind from his soul, his theories from his better impulses, his thought from his heart. Think of a rational being's convincing himself that it is a worthy thing to murder another man who has a wife or family or friends who may be made to suffer,—above all things to murder a man who has been chosen by over half the people of a great country as their ruler; a ruler too who is meeting one on grounds of equality, to give him a friendly shake of the hand! Possibly such a person is sane; but there is many an insane patient less dangerous. We lock up the insane to keep them from doing harm. Why should we not lock up the anarchist to keep him from doing harm?

The particular fact, however, that I want to emphasize this morning is this: that a condition of mind similar to that of the anarchist's, tho manifested in a less degree, is not uncommon. Those who have dealings with criminals tell us that, as a rule, they always try to justify their criminal action, and

often imagine that they have done so; and all of us know to-day some persons, criminals in a less degree, who are doing the same thing. What is the cause of such a state of mind? At some period away back in the past, perhaps, there was for every one of these persons a time when he was conscious of a thought prompting to action which his better nature, his heart, told him was contrary to the dictates of love, of the feeling that he should exercise toward his neighbor, toward one who is a child of the same God as himself. The action in question was a slight one, perhaps, but, when tempted to it, he yielded. He did not repent. He has yielded to greater temptations since then; and the result is that he holds to-day certain theories with reference to life that are wrong through and through, and nothing but the grace of God, almost miraculously displayed, can change them. He may be merely aristocratic in his feelings, sharp in his bargains, deceitful in his phrases; or he may be an evil doer on a larger scale than these; but the false theory is there. He has learned to believe without being influenced from the heart. He may still look to God for guidance, throw up his hands for help, surpliced hands perhaps like sails, wide spread for every wind of heaven; but, like an anchor dragging and grating on rocks under the surface, his false theory, formed without regard to the promptings of his better nature, will impede his progress, tho, thanks to the mercy of God, progress he may make. Let us beware, therefore, of accepting any theory of action

that, at any time, no matter how slightly, violates the better promptings within. It is only with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness.

We have considered the career of a man who has learned not to let his heart, his better impulses, influence his thought so as virtually to control his beliefs. Now let us turn from him in order to consider a man of an opposite character,—one who believes with his heart, and therefore who believes unto righteousness, believes in such a way as to cause righteous conceptions and conduct in himself, and righteous life in the community which he influences. If Mr. McKinley be destined to be considered in the near or remote future one of the greatest presidents of the United States, it will, in the last analysis, be owing solely to the fact that he has had a great heart, and allowed this in every case to control his actions. What perhaps first attracted attention and gave him prominence, when a soldier in the civil war, was the self-forgetful considerateness with which, when temporarily in charge of the commissary department of his regiment, he exposed himself in the open field, close under the fire of the enemy from which his comrades were screened, in order to distribute drink and food to those who otherwise might have perished from exhaustion. The thought that he expended upon his comrades then, the righteousness that he exhibited, proceeded from one who had behind his thought a right heart.

"Is McKinley what you would call a successful wire-puller?" I asked of a prominent political man-

ager of Ohio,—one of the four most prominent in the state. "Not at all," he answered. "He never has had to pull wires. He is simply good-hearted. One can oppose him all he wishes, McKinley will never accept his enmity, but help him to a position and office if he deserve it as readily as if he had always been a most ardent supporter." Mr. McKinley was made Governor of Ohio and President of the United States less because of his intellectual and executive abilities, his eloquence and legislative foresight, tho these were acknowledged, than because, behind his thought and his method of expressing it in speech and council, he had a trustworthy heart. This it was that made him, in the estimation of his supporters, a righteous man.

When he became our Chief Executive he manifested the same traits, as indeed he had manifested them before when leader of the House. During the discussions following the sinking of the Maine, and preceding the declaration of war against Spain, the Republican members of Congress were deluged with letters from their constituents urging them to do something. The Senate tried to do something—wrong if not right—by passing a resolution recognizing the independence of Cuba. The House was prepared by a large majority to pass the same resolution. But the President, with the aid of Mr. Reed, the Speaker, prevented the resolution from being even submitted to the vote of the Representatives. Sixty Republicans held a meeting and resolved, if possible, to bring the President to terms. A friend

of mine was made chairman of a committee to call at the White House for that purpose. He told me that he made the most savage attack that he dared to make upon a President of his own party, and that he was followed by all the rest of the committee, expressing almost equal hostility. After they were through, the President thanked them in the most cordial terms for their frankness, and said that they had told him exactly what he wanted to know,—i. e., the sentiments of their constituents. Then he began to ask them questions, put in forms, however, to make them the strongest kinds of arguments:—how they would carry out their conceptions; who was the President of the Cuban Republic, and where he lived; if he were a man who could wisely direct the movements of United States soldiers, were they obliged to land in his country; whether it might not be wise to delay a little, till France and Italy and Austria, naturally sympathetic with Spain, had been prepared by our foreign ministers for some such action on our part; and till we had purchased a few more rounds of ammunition from abroad. Then, as they were leaving, he said gently, "I am trying to do my best. I hope you'll not turn your backs upon me." They went out of the door and down through the White House grounds to the street, where they were to take the trolley for the Capitol. Then, as they stood there, looking at one another, they all began to laugh. Coming through the grounds, two by two, each had learned that the one beside him had been brought over to the Executive's opinion.

They were going back to tell the indignant crowd whom they had represented that they all agreed with the President. "You may call such a man weak," said my informant, "but if he had been weak, he would then and there have split the party." But, you see, friends, it takes two to make a quarrel, just as, before the time of matches, it used to take the friction of two sticks to make a fire. The party leaders, much as some of them may have desired it, did not have a chance to quarrel with Mr. McKinley. He was too good natured to take, in a proper spirit for their purpose, either the hint or the hit that they tried to give him. It was the great and righteous heart behind his thought and speech and bearing that made him the great and righteous politician that he was.

So with reference to that which is termed the expansion of our country, with which his name will always be connected. What, in the future, he will be praised for most in his relations to this will be that for which, probably, he has been the most blamed in the present;—i. e., for keeping his ear to the ground to hear what were the wishes of the people—for traveling from Boston to Atlanta and through the middle West before his signing of the Treaty of Paris, in order to find out what the people of the country wanted. A cold-hearted, selfish, even a self-opinionated man, would never have done this. McKinley believed with his heart—believed with a nature that loved and trusted his fellow-citizens, and, in a great emergency, felt that their con-

clusions should be consulted. In a country like ours, in which public sentiment rules, and will be sure to manifest itself at some time, however a temporary administration may succeed in going contrary to it, this course of the President was certainly the wisest possible. But, notice, it was the instinctive prompting of the sympathetic heart behind the course of action that he pursued which made this course, in the opinion of the people, righteous; and thus made him a great statesman.

But there is something better than being a great statesman. It is being a great man; and here at least, whatever you may have thought of what I have said so far, I know that you will agree with me. If, in the future, Mr. McKinley is to be called a great man, it will be because of the love that underlay all the movements of his mind and the least, as well as the greatest, action through which they were expressed. In the school-readers of the time when I was a boy there used to be stories of our prominent men, intended to illustrate the fact that, from their youth up, they had been distinguished for truthfulness, as in the tale of Washington and his hatchet, or for honesty, or for purity, or for generosity, or for some other of the virtues of private-life. Our forefathers felt, far more than we do to-day, that the influence for good of a great man upon young people depends mainly upon their having a profound impression that, as a rule, great excellence in personal character underlies broad and enduring influence for good upon others. It certainly was wise

to try to convey such an impression. Nothing can do more harm than to convey an opposite impression. No man has a moral right to do anything to suggest that public services can atone for private sins. The greater the services that are recognized, the greater the injury that may be done by the example that is ignored. But when a country has produced a leader whose public achievements, brilliant as they may have been, are but what green leaves are to a flower beside the beauty of his private life, then indeed is that country blest! Then to youth comes an ideal that, in every sense, can inspire, to age comes an incarnation of the spiritual that can strengthen faith, and to all a consciousness of the nearness of the divine!

Do I exaggerate? Think what it is in these days of partisan newspapers and of people of so-called culture, tho of narrow range, prone to talk as if every man who gives himself to public life were giving himself to private plunder; think what it is in such an age to have it proven beyond all question that a man may be the keenest politician of his time, and yet the incarnation of unselfishness; that he may rise to the highest station, and yet have the humblest spirit; that he may be one of the most powerful of earthly rulers, yet be ready, at a moment's warning, to say, "Thy will, not mine, be done"! This considerate son and husband, stopping every day amid all the cares of government to send a note, in his own handwriting, to his aged mother; with a wife so unnerved by disease as not to recognize im-

propriety in what others might consider exacting, and whose wishes, which most men might have deemed themselves justified in ignoring, he always granted, no matter how much inconvenience or embarrassment it might cause him, either at an inaugural ball or a diplomatic dinner; this fine-grained gentleman, whose first instinctive thoughts at the moment of facing a possible death, were in behalf of his wife, and of his assassin, and of those whose guest he was; this Christian martyr, who, at the moment of consciously facing inevitable death, and with probably more reasons, and worthy reasons, for wishing to live than anyone on the globe to-day; this man, muttering with his last feeble breath no complaint, but only the words, "It is God's way; His will be done"—are you not thankful to God, and proud that such a man has been the President of the United States? Do you doubt that through all time our children's children will be the better for his life and influence? I think not. It is sad to have him go as he did; but if he had gone in any other way the world, perhaps, might never have known his character, or have been inspired by it, as it will be now.

And, friends, think of this:—for beings constituted with minds and spirits like our own, a thought, an ideal for thought, is often infinitely more important than the prolongation of any one man's earthly life, even tho that one man be the Christ.

END.

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